ROBERT KIRKMAN LUDO LULLABI MIKE SPICER

TRANSFORMERS

image

#31

ENERGON UNIVERSE

TRANSFORMERS

ISSUE THIRTY-ONE

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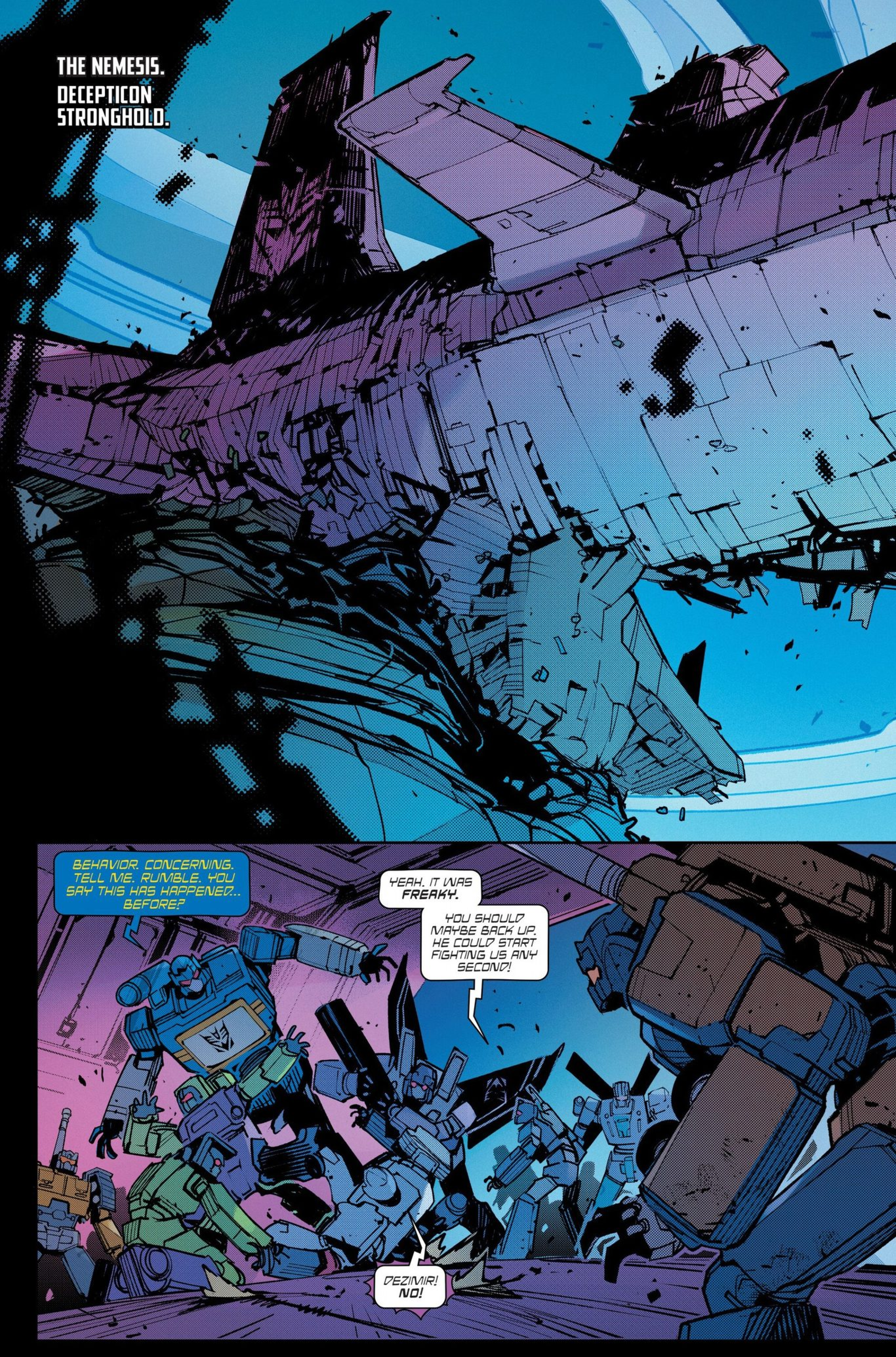
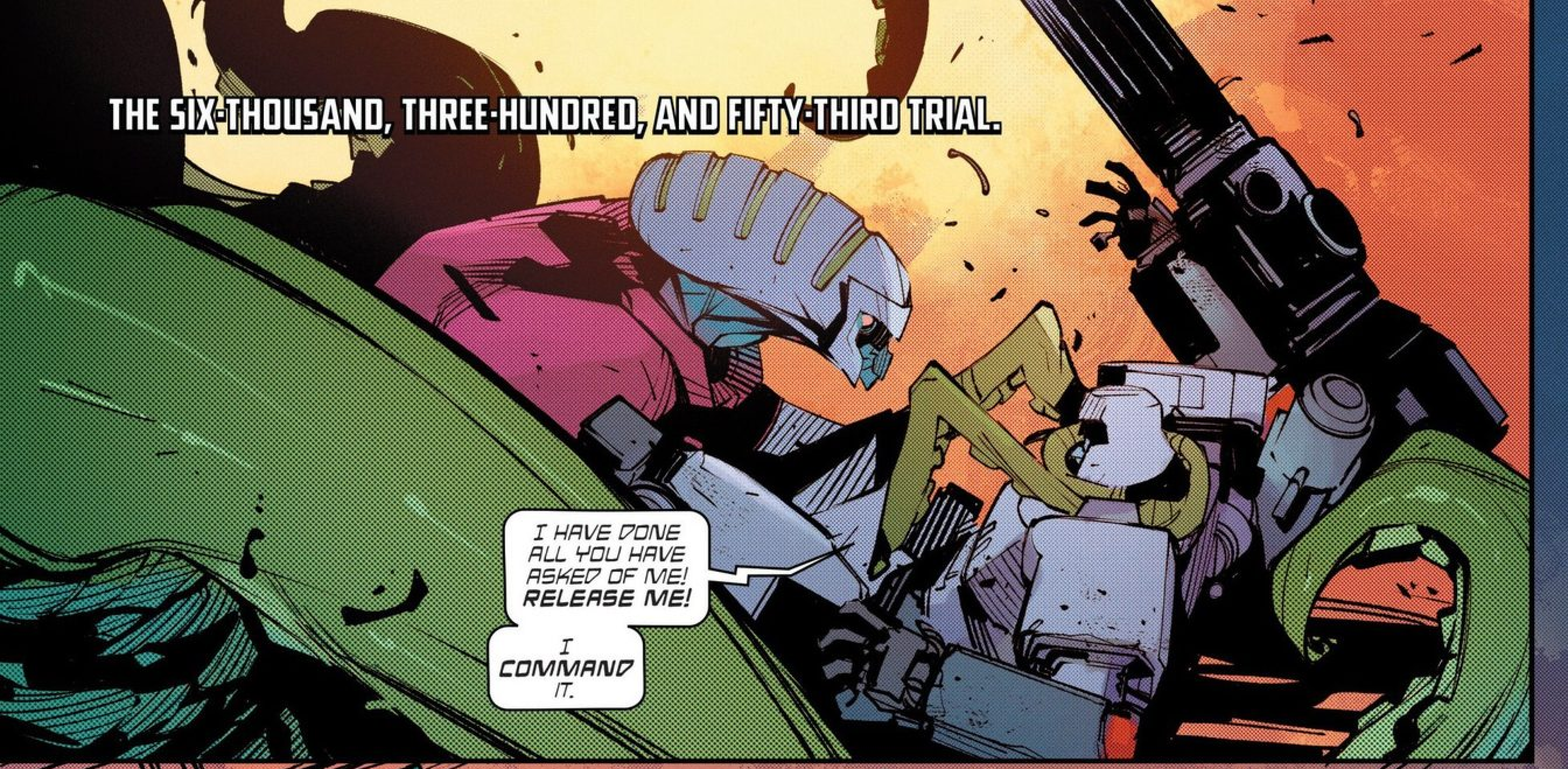
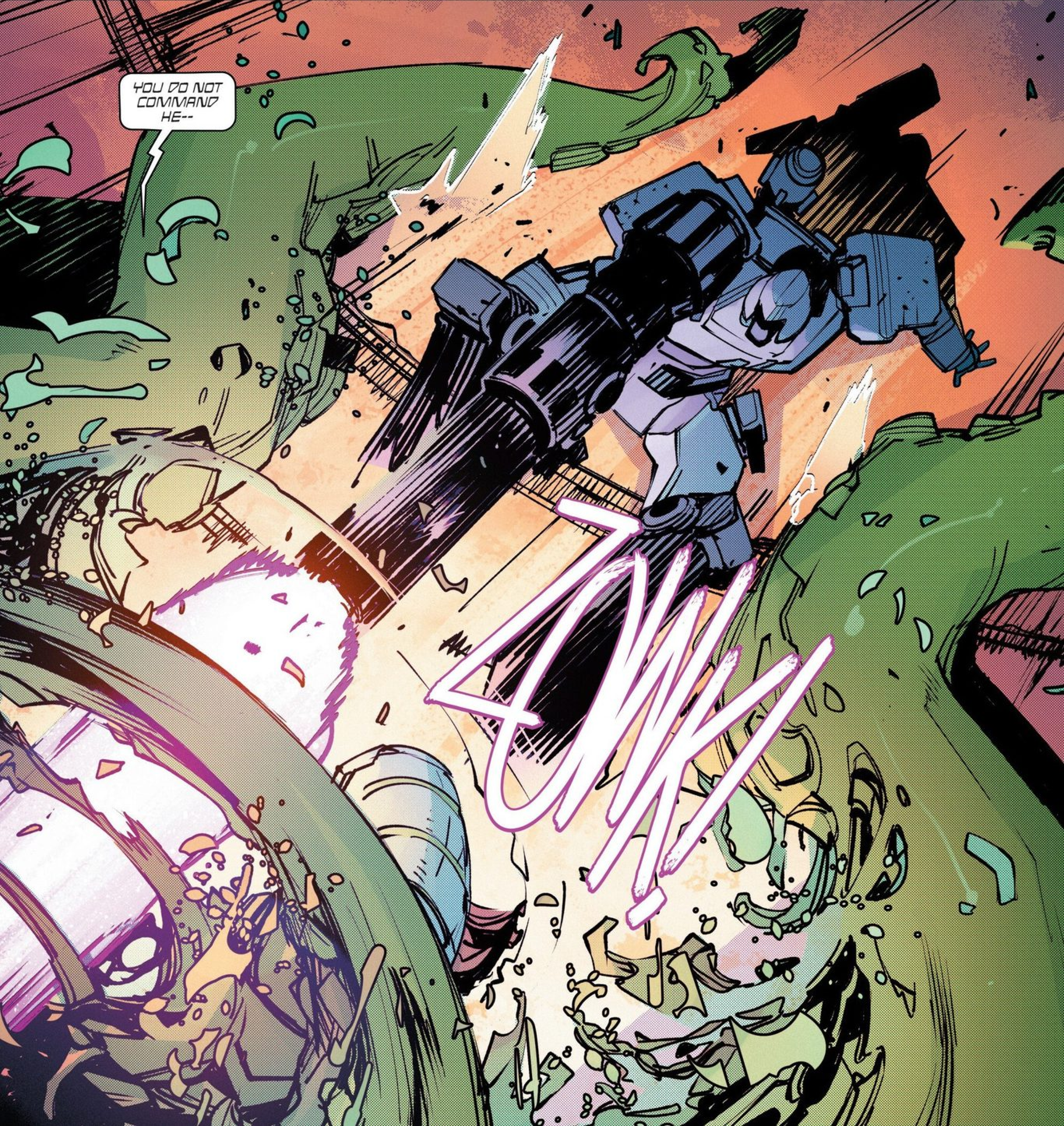
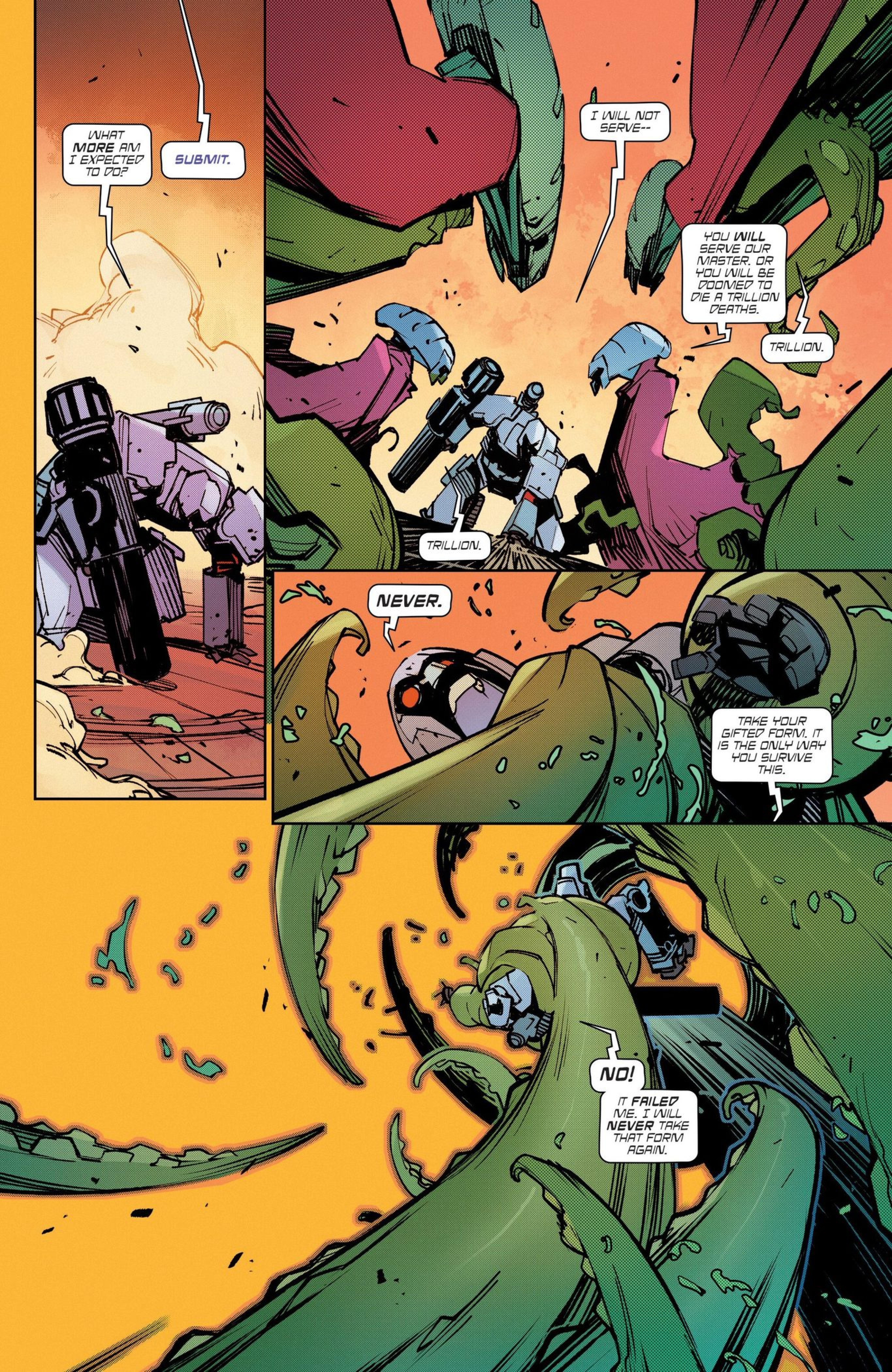
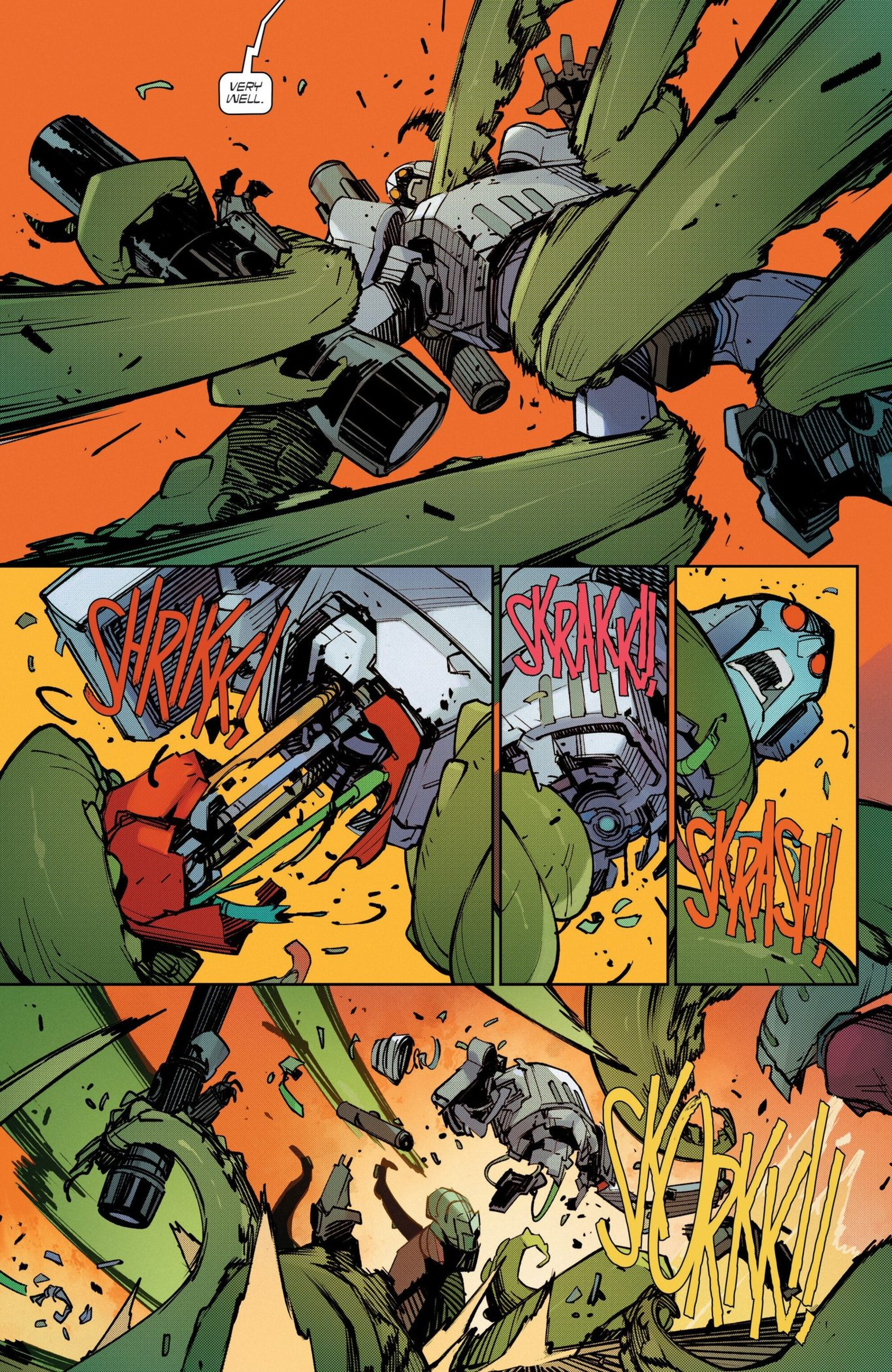
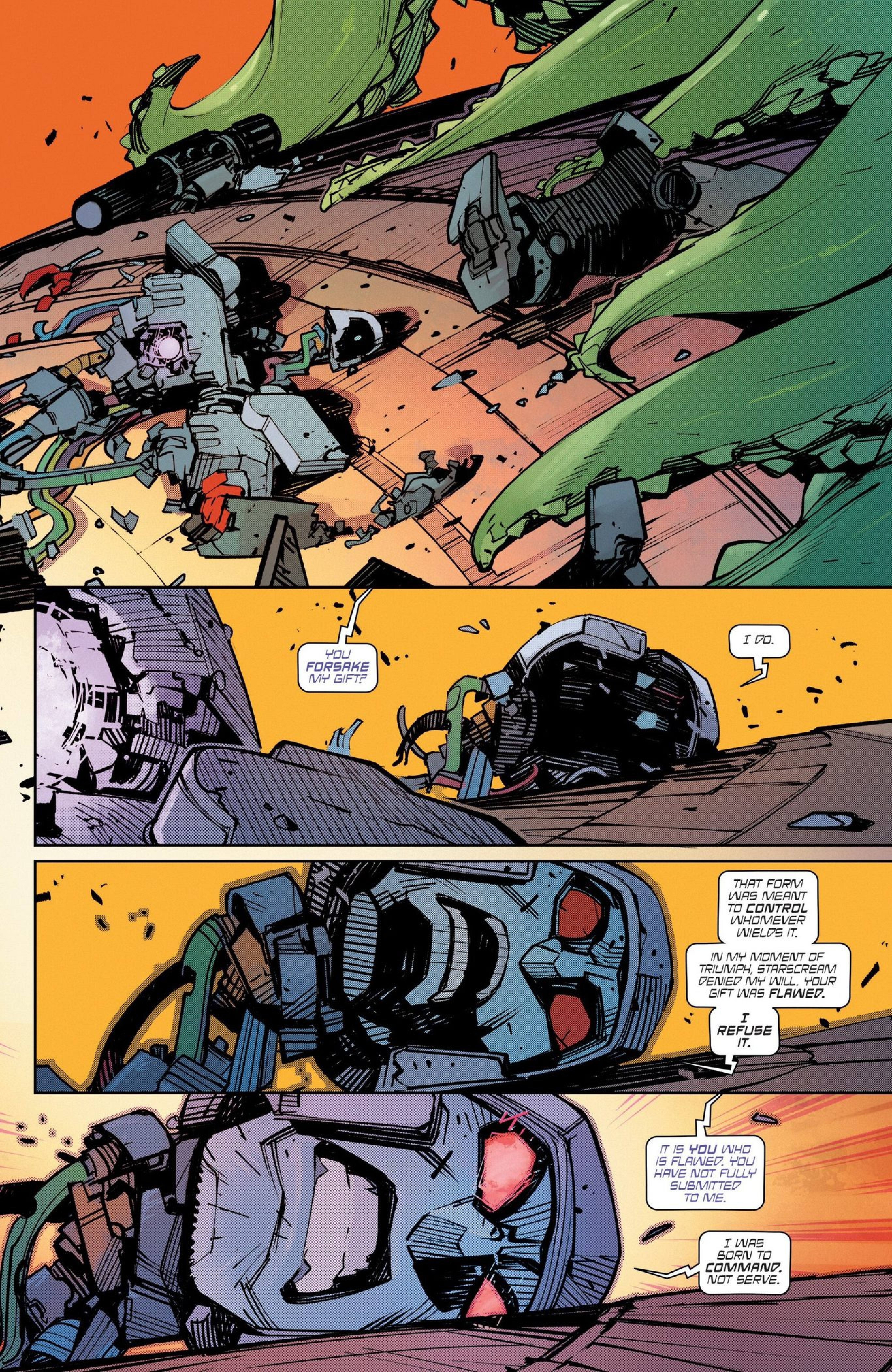

THE NEMESIS.
DECEPTICON STRONGHOLD.
BEHAVIOR. CONCERNING. TELL ME. RUMBLE. YOU SAY THIS HAS HAPPENED... BEFORE?
YEAH. IT WAS **FREAKY.**
YOU SHOULD MAYBE BACK UP. HE COULD START FIGHTING US ANY SECOND!
DEZIMIR! **NO!**

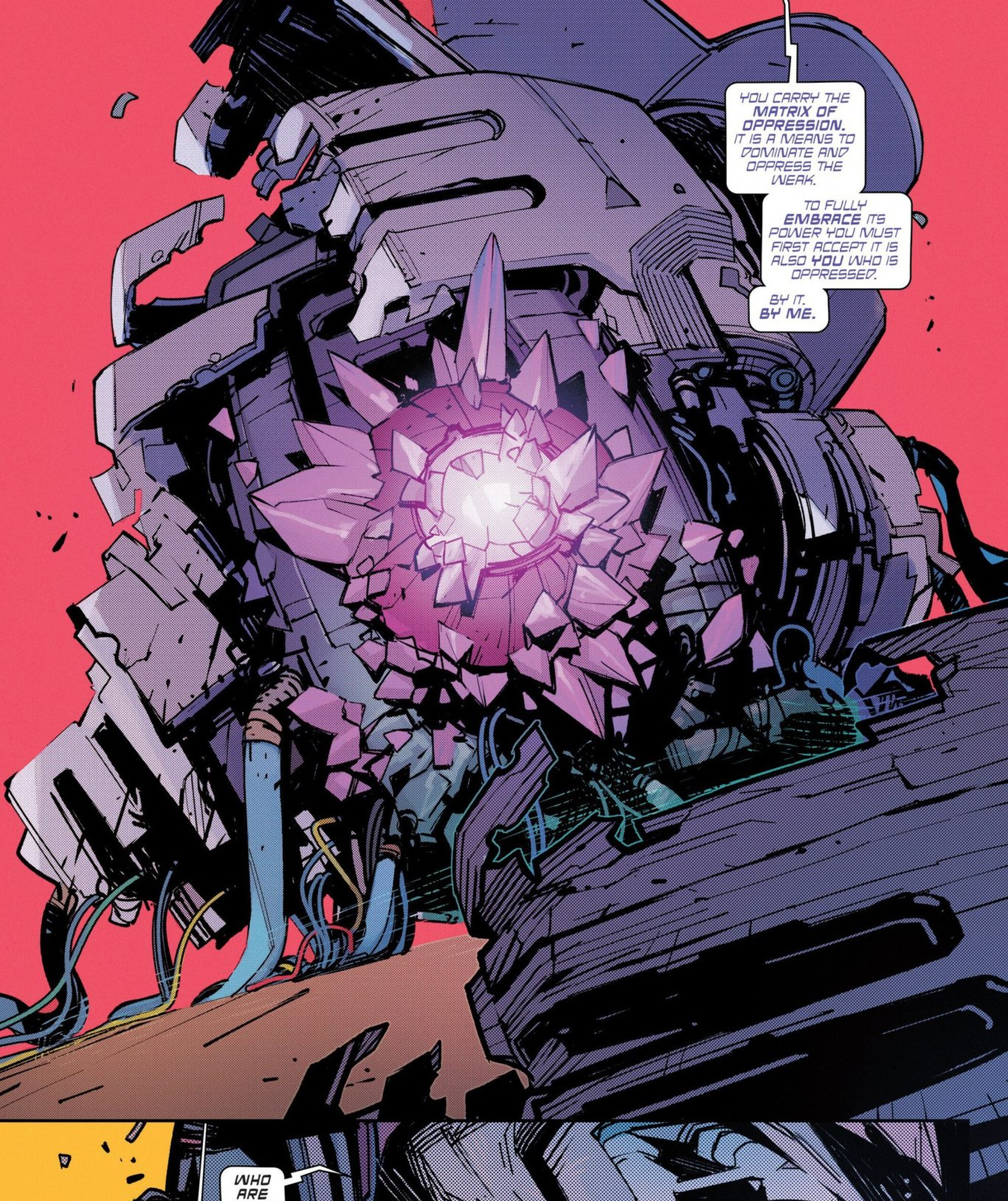

THE SIX-THOUSAND, THREE-HUNDRED, AND FIFTY-THIRD TRIAL.
I HAVE DONE ALL YOU HAVE ASKED OF ME! **RELEASE ME!**
I **COMMAND** IT.

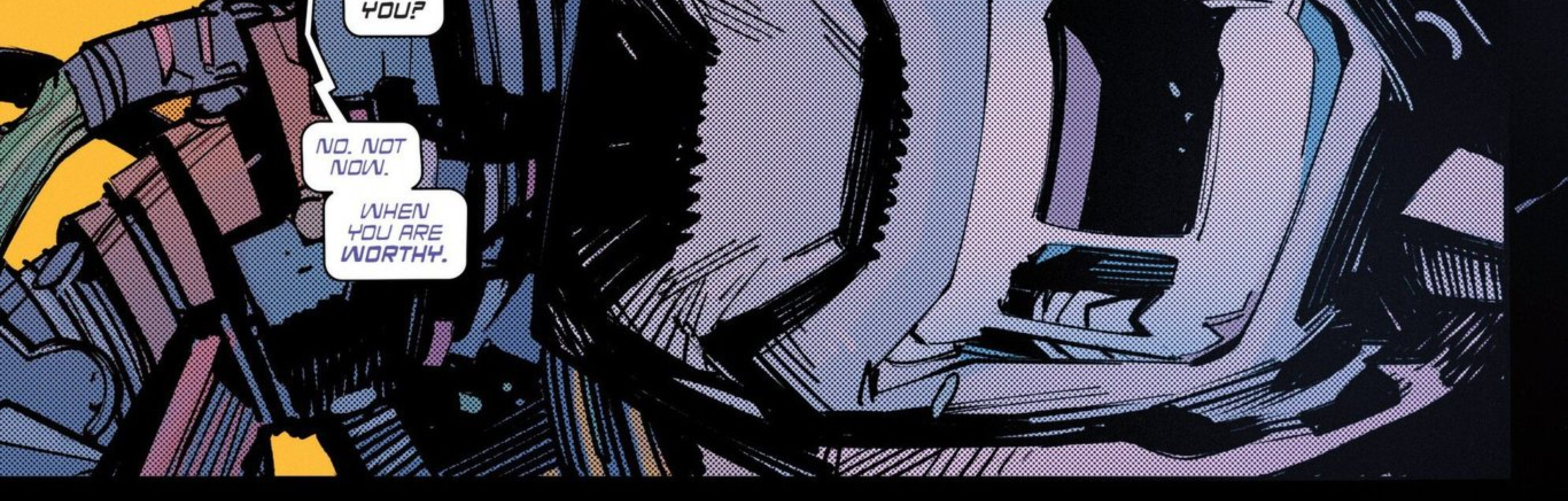

YOU DO NOT COMMAND HE--
ZONK!

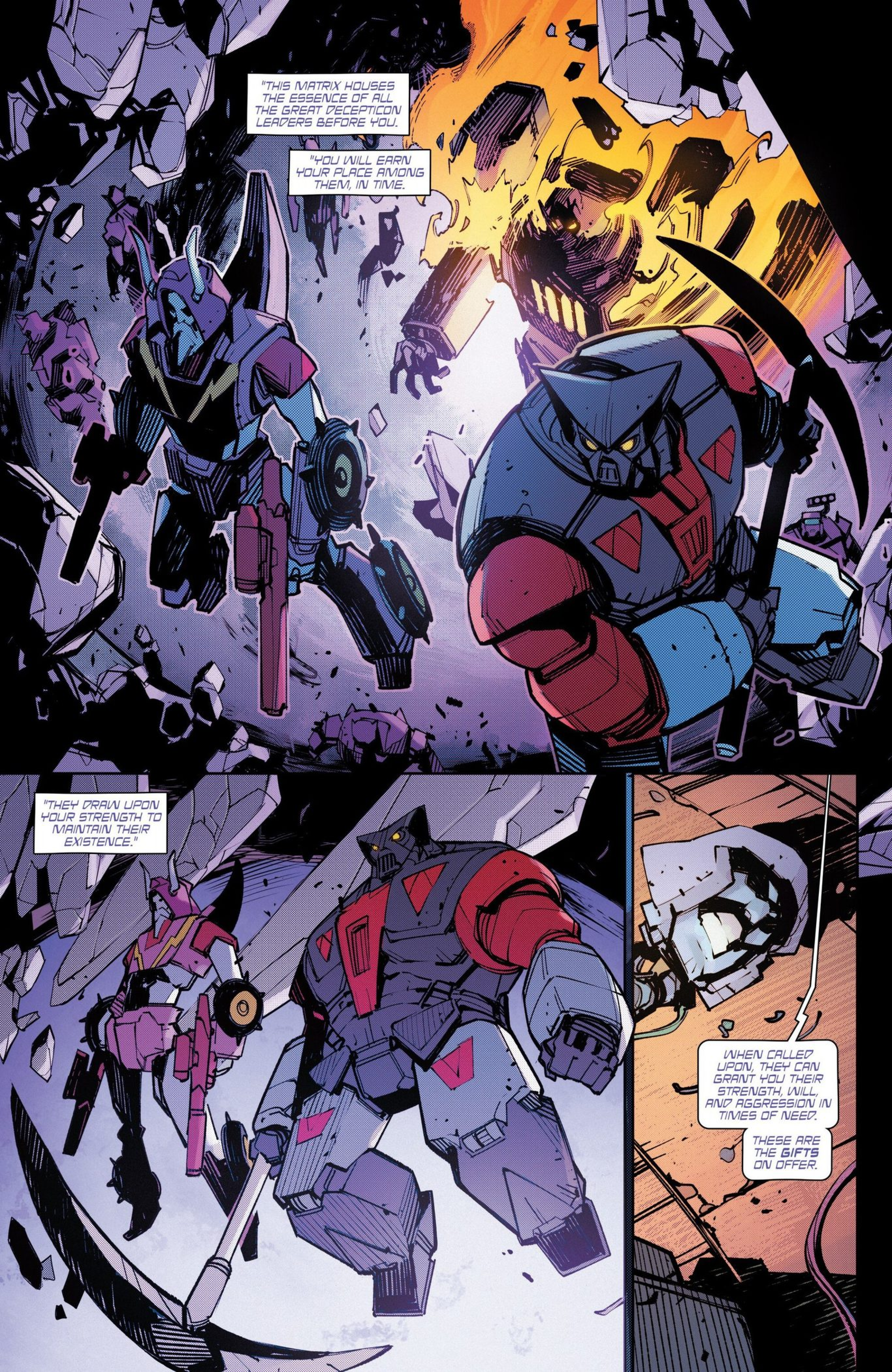

WHAT **MORE** AM I EXPECTED TO DO?
SUBMIT.
I WILL NOT SERVE--
YOU **WILL** SERVE OUR MASTER, OR YOU WILL BE DOOMED TO DIE A TRILLION DEATHS.
TRILLION.
TRILLION.
NEVER.
TAKE YOUR GIFTED FORM. IT IS THE ONLY WAY YOU SURVIVE THIS.
NO!
IT **FAILED** ME. I WILL **NEVER** TAKE THAT FORM AGAIN.

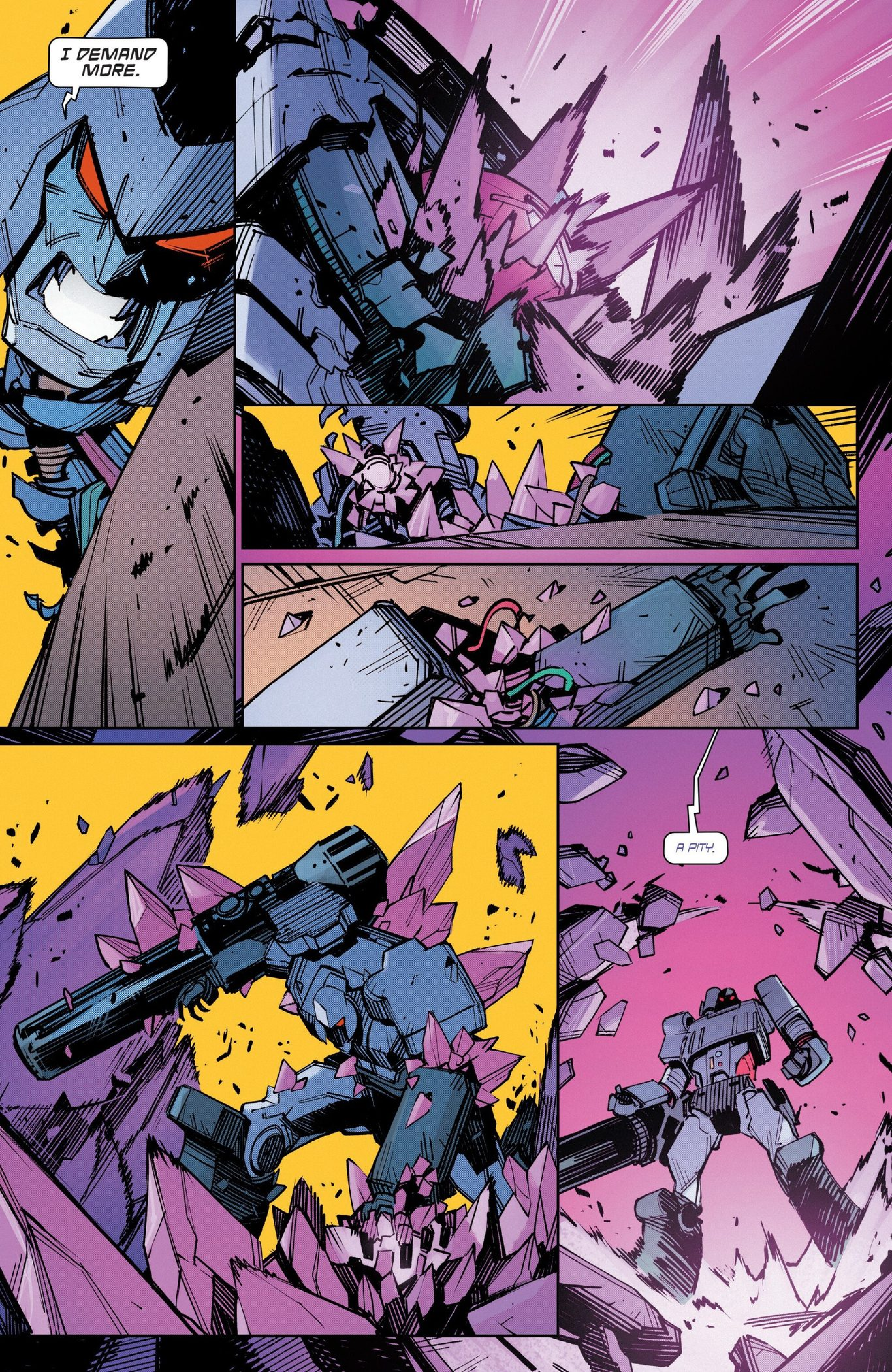

VERY WELL.
SHRIKK!
SKRAKK!!
SKRASH!!
SKRKK!!

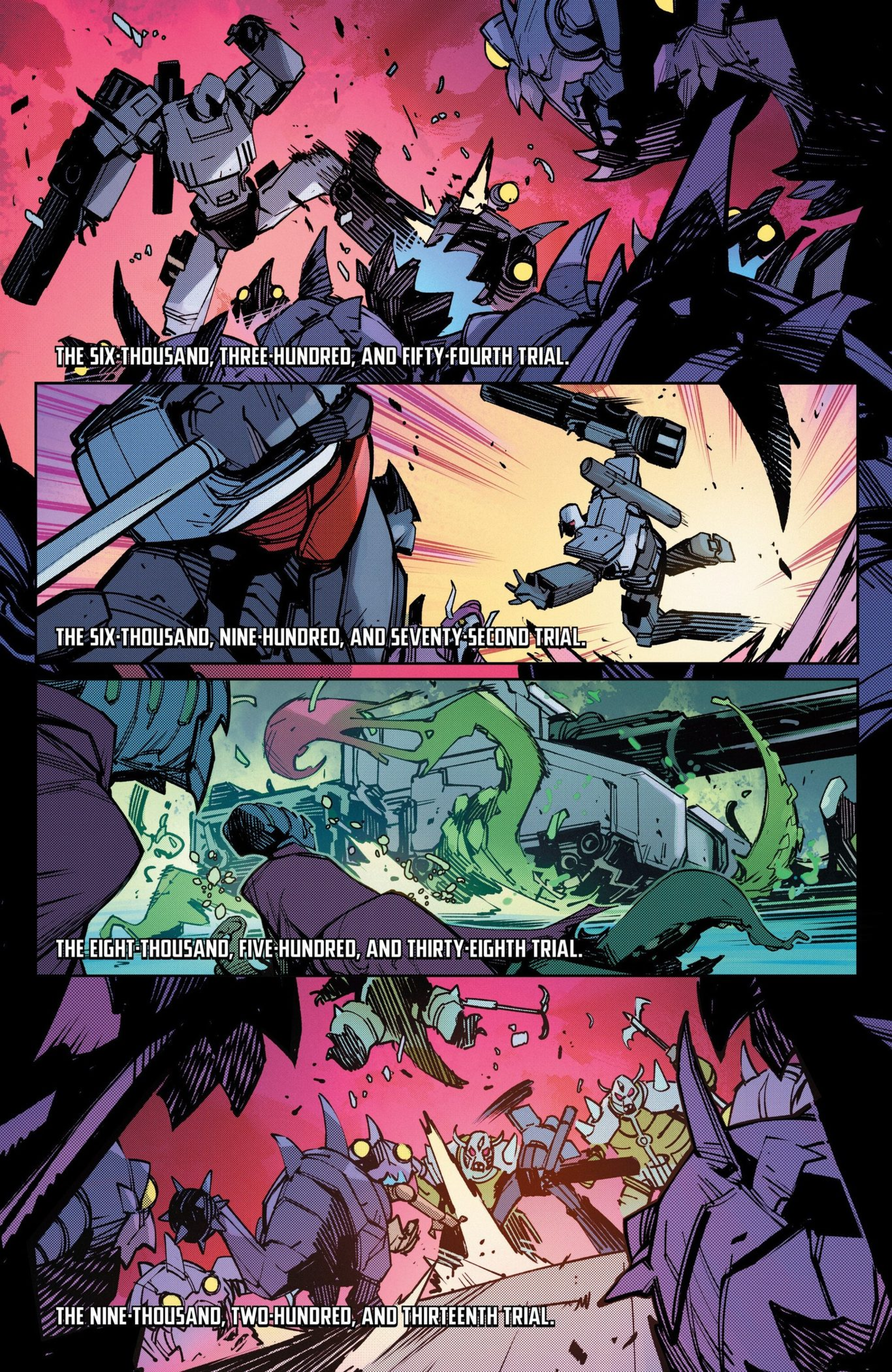

YOU **FORSAKE** MY GIFT?
I DO.
THAT FORM WAS MEANT TO **CONTROL** WHOMEVER WIELDS IT.
IN MY MOMENT OF TRIUMPH, STARSCREAM DENIED MY WILL. YOUR GIFT WAS **FLAWED.**
I REFUSE IT.
IT IS **YOU** WHO IS FLAWED. YOU HAVE NOT FULLY SUBMITTED TO ME.
I WAS BORN TO **COMMAND.** NOT SERVE.

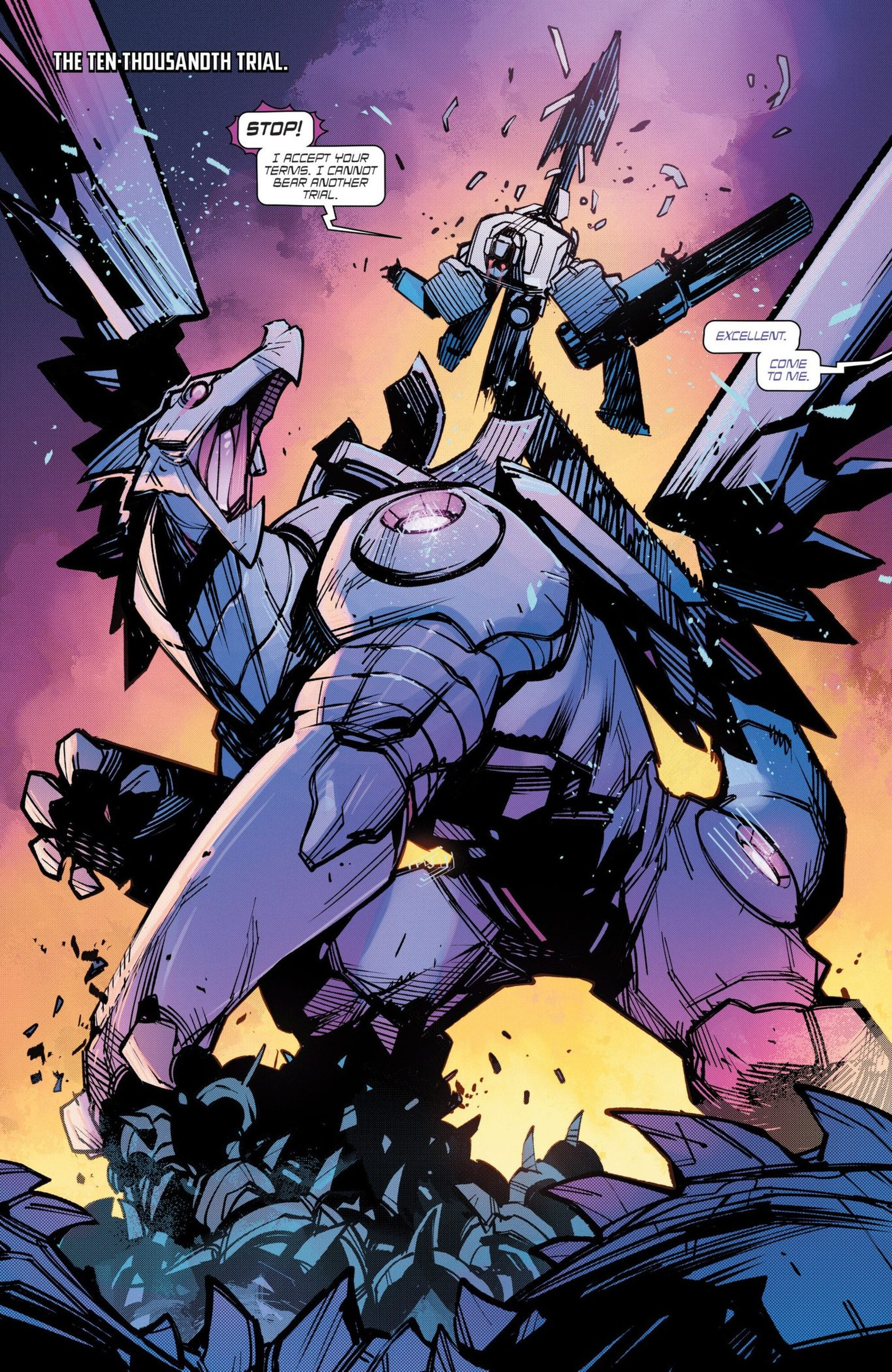

YOU CARRY THE MATRIX OF OPPRESSION. IT IS A MEANS TO DOMINATE AND OPPRESS THE WEAK.
TO FULLY EMBRACE ITS POWER YOU MUST FIRST ACCEPT IT IS ALSO YOU WHO IS OPPRESSED.
BY IT. BY ME.

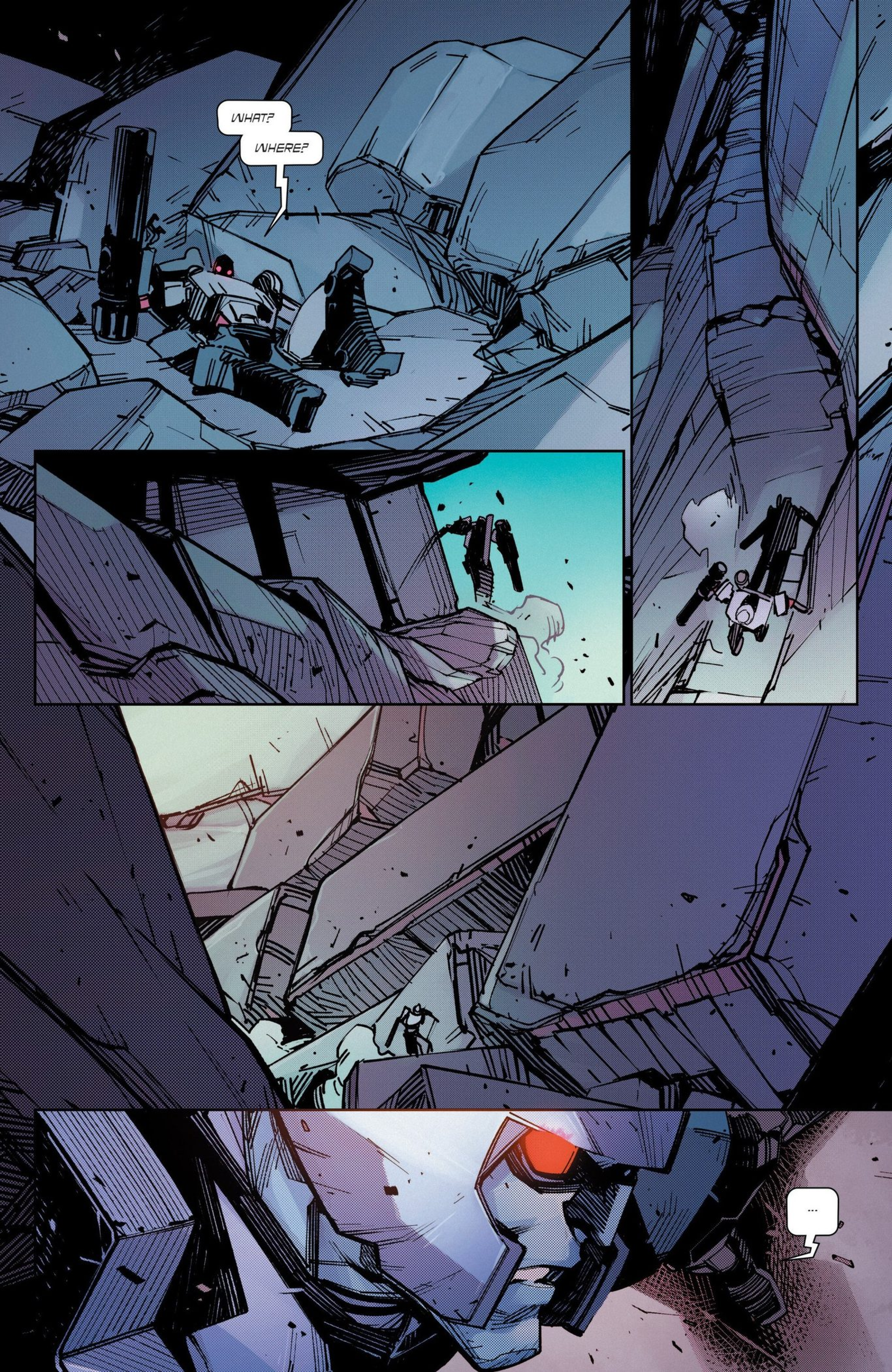

WHO ARE YOU?
NO. NOT NOW.
WHEN YOU ARE WORTHY.

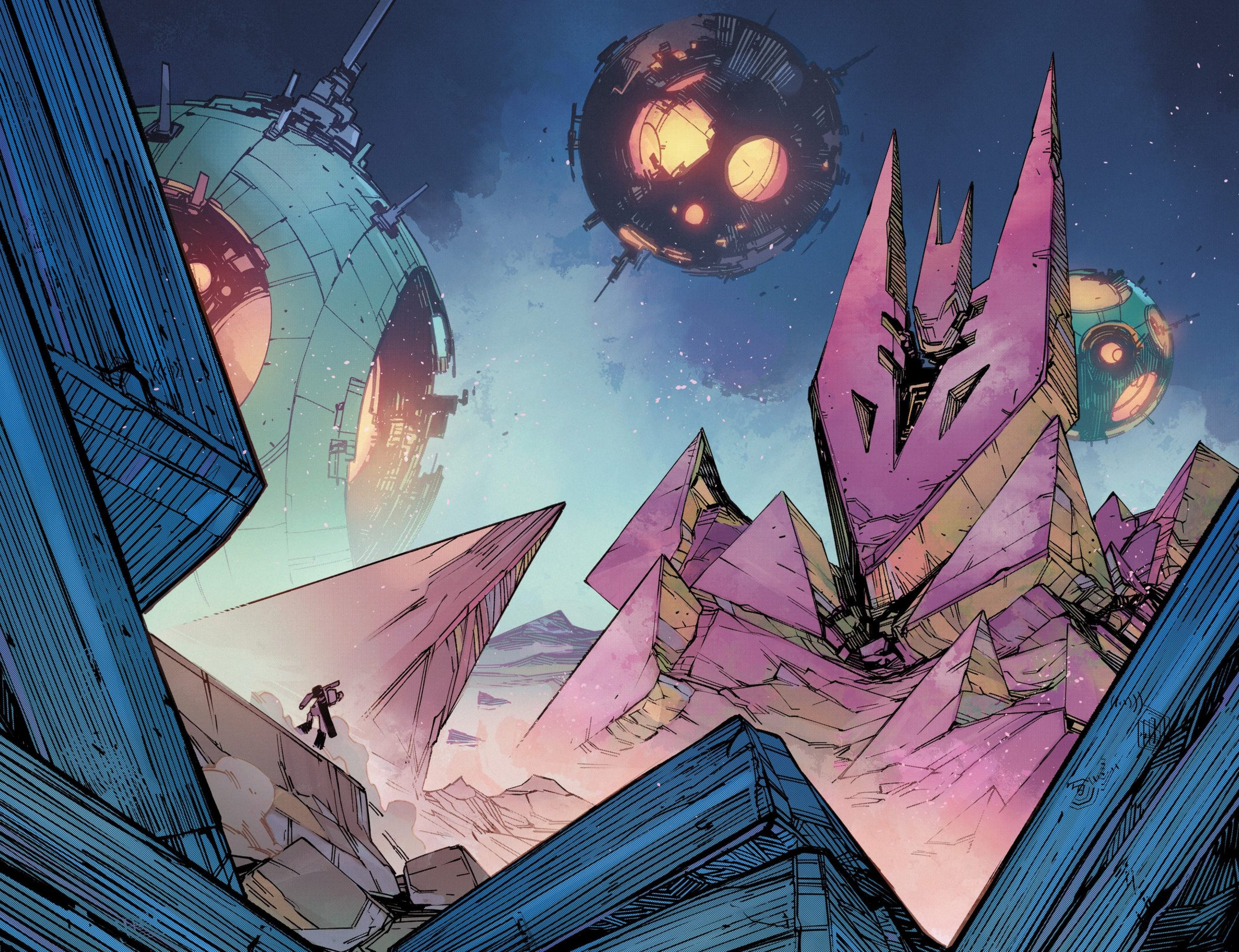

"THIS MATRIX HOUSES THE ESSENCE OF ALL THE GREAT DECEPTICON LEADERS BEFORE YOU.
"YOU WILL EARN YOUR PLACE AMONG THEM, IN TIME.
"THEY DRAW UPON YOUR STRENGTH TO MAINTAIN THEIR EXISTENCE."
WHEN CALLED UPON, THEY CAN GRANT YOU THEIR STRENGTH, WILL, AND AGGRESSION IN TIMES OF NEED.
THESE ARE THE **GIFTS** ON OFFER.

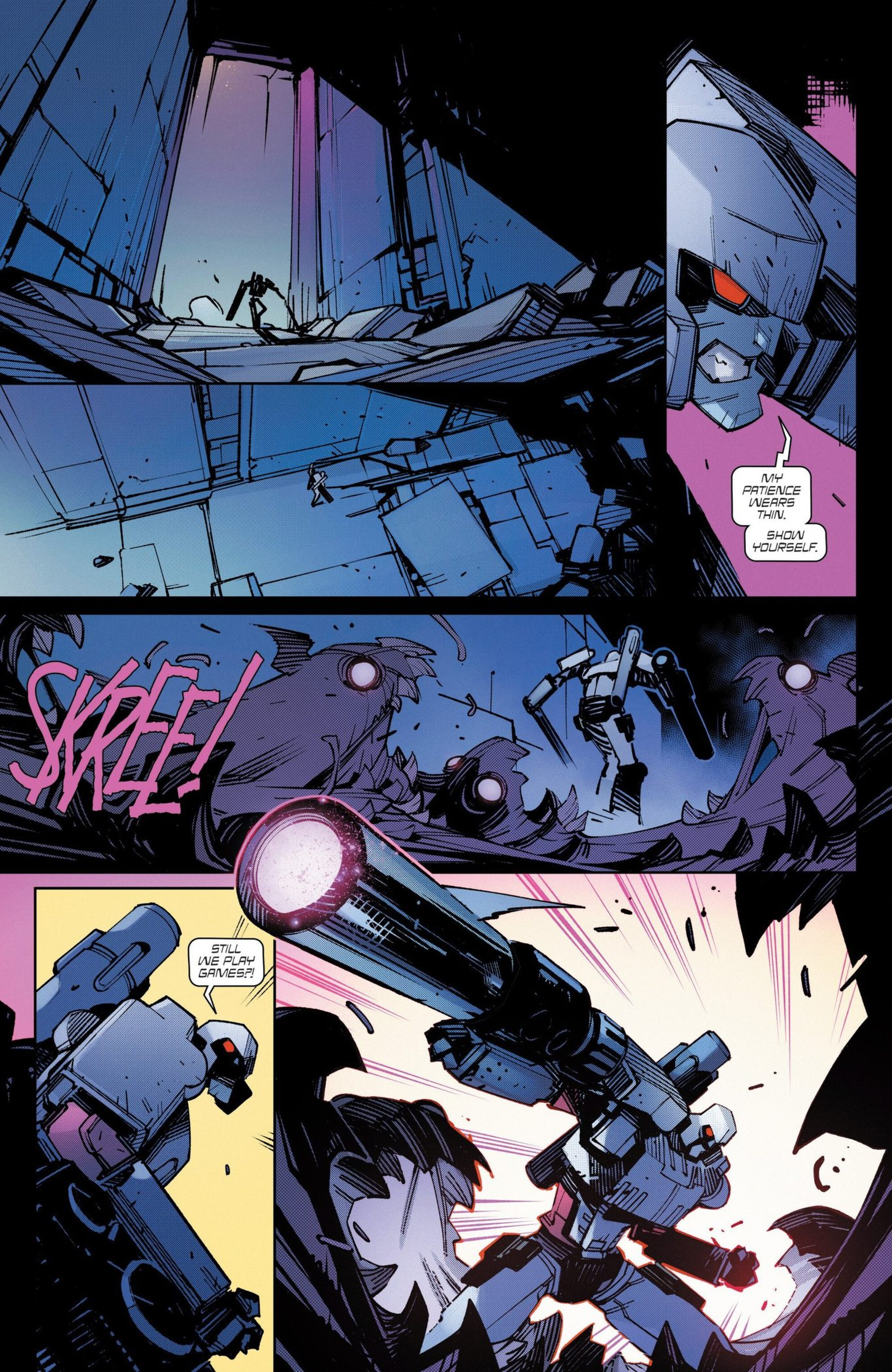

I DEMAND MORE.
A PITY.

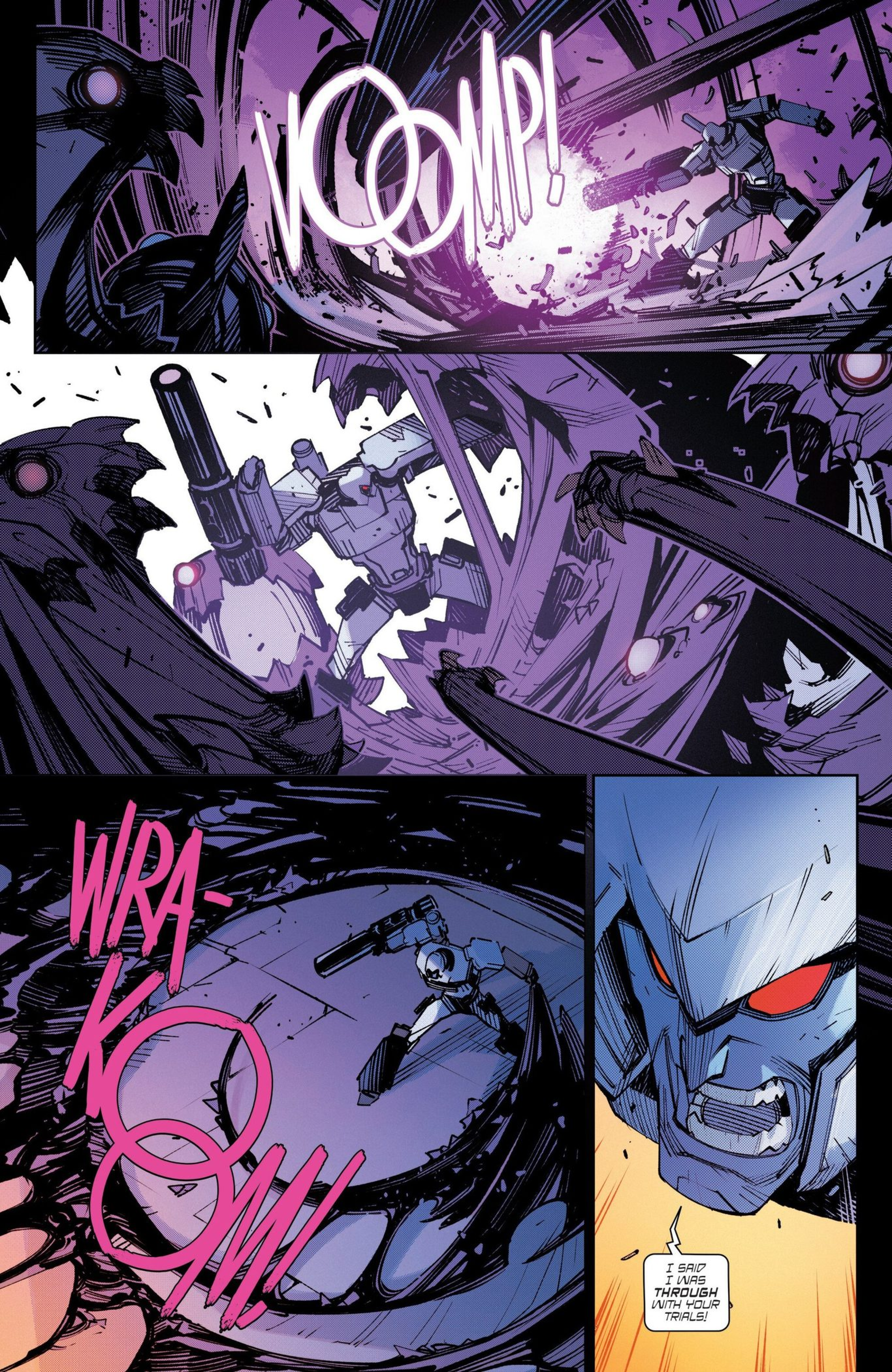

THE SIX-THOUSAND, THREE-HUNDRED, AND FIFTY-FOURTH TRIAL.
THE SIX-THOUSAND, NINE-HUNDRED, AND SEVENTY-SECOND TRIAL.
THE EIGHT-THOUSAND, FIVE-HUNDRED, AND THIRTY-EIGHTH TRIAL.
THE NINE-THOUSAND, TWO-HUNDRED, AND THIRTEENTH TRIAL.

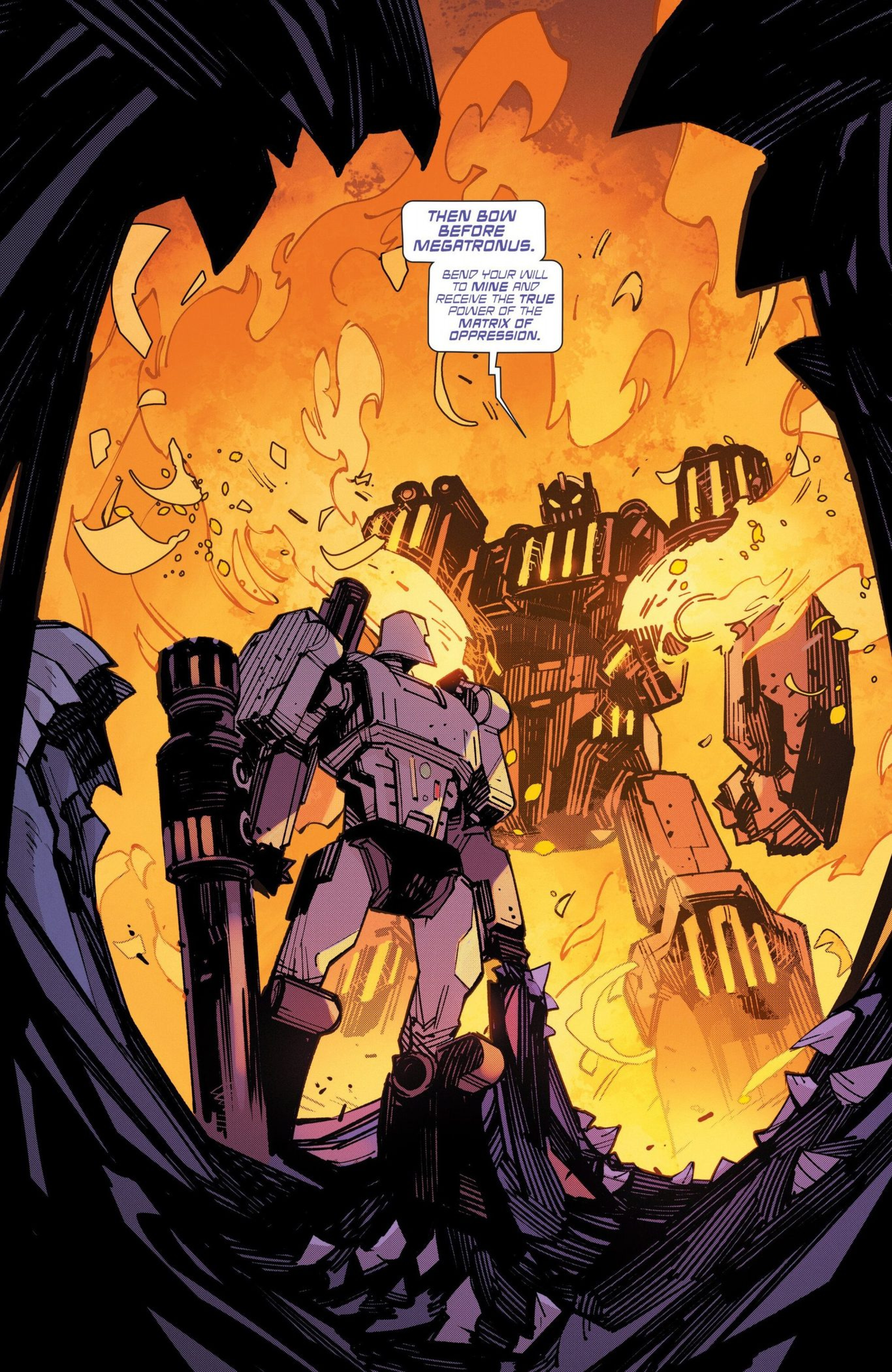

THE TEN-THOUSANDTH TRIAL.
STOP!
I ACCEPT YOUR TERMS. I CANNOT BEAR ANOTHER TRIAL.
EXCELLENT.
COME TO ME.

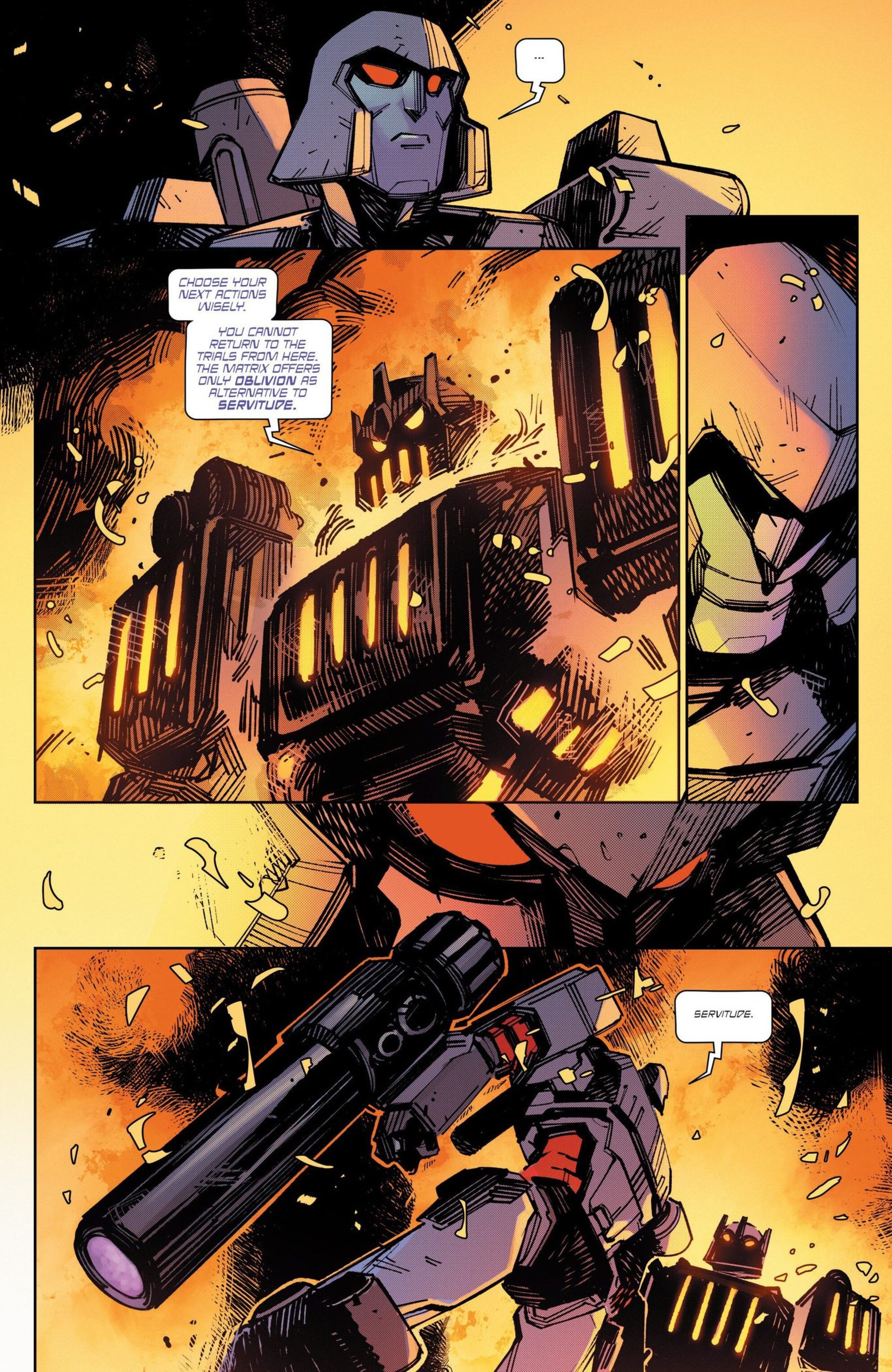

WHAT?
WHERE?
...

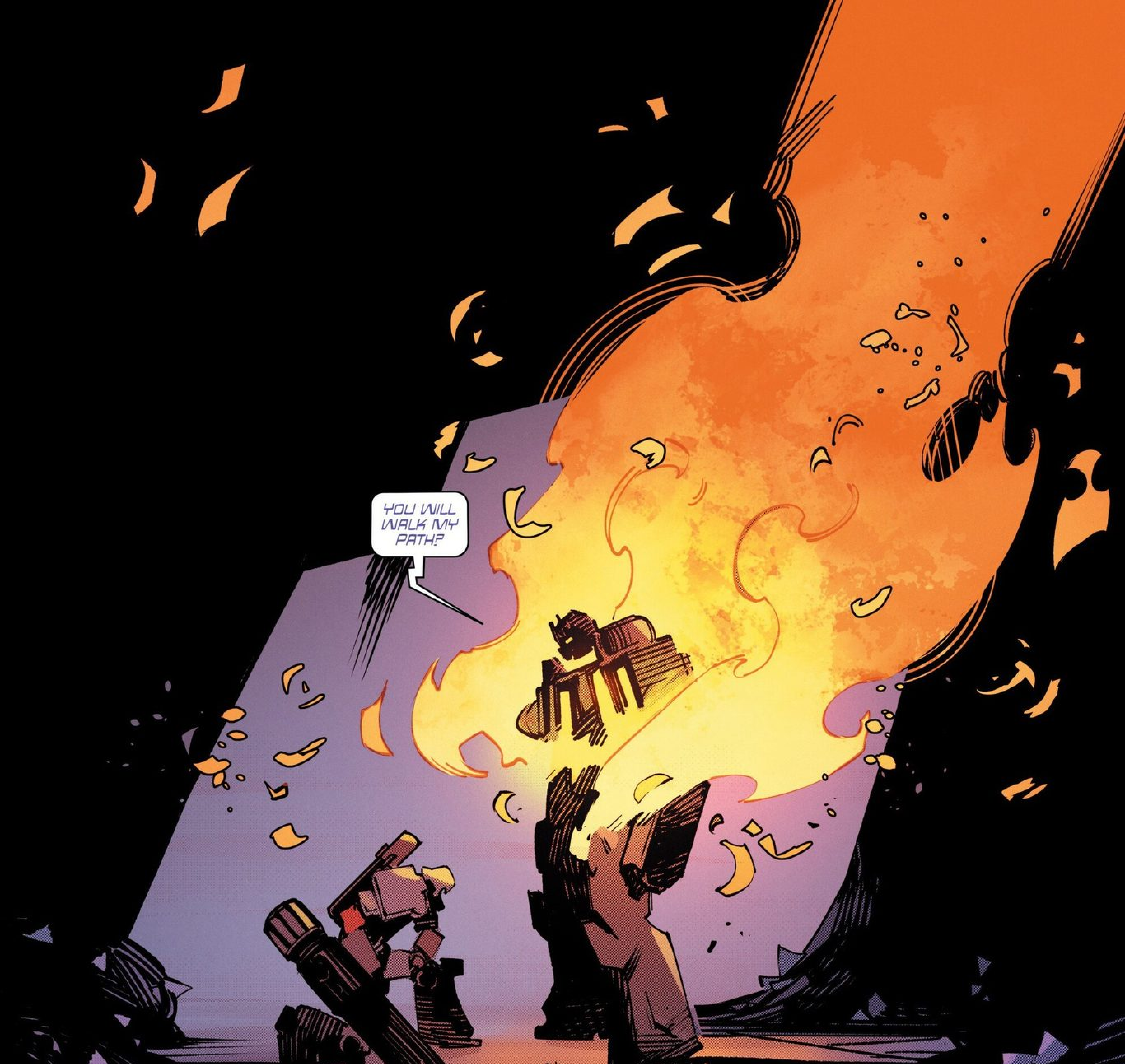


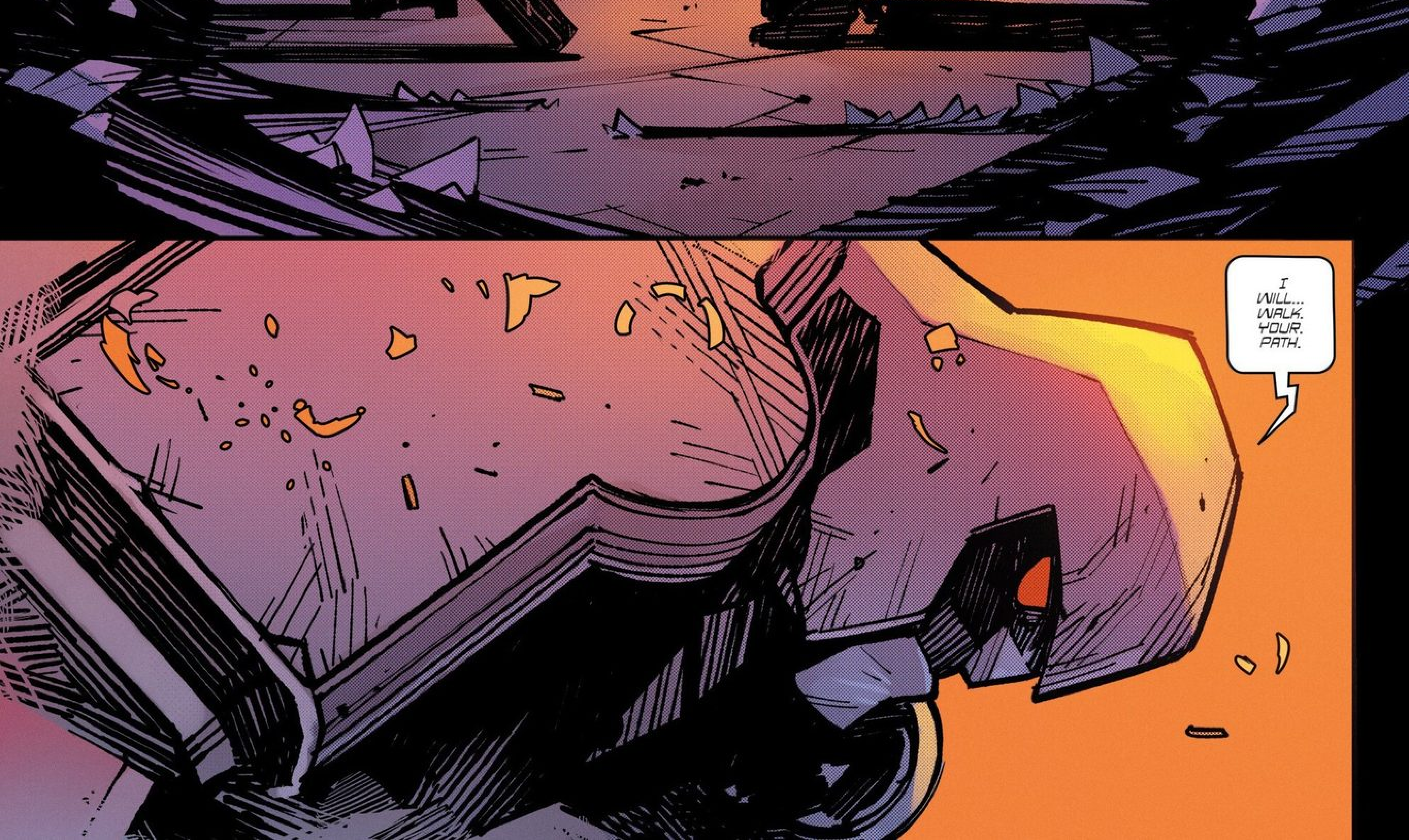

MY PATIENCE WEARS THIN.
SHOW YOURSELF.
SKREE!
STILL WE PLAY GAMES?!

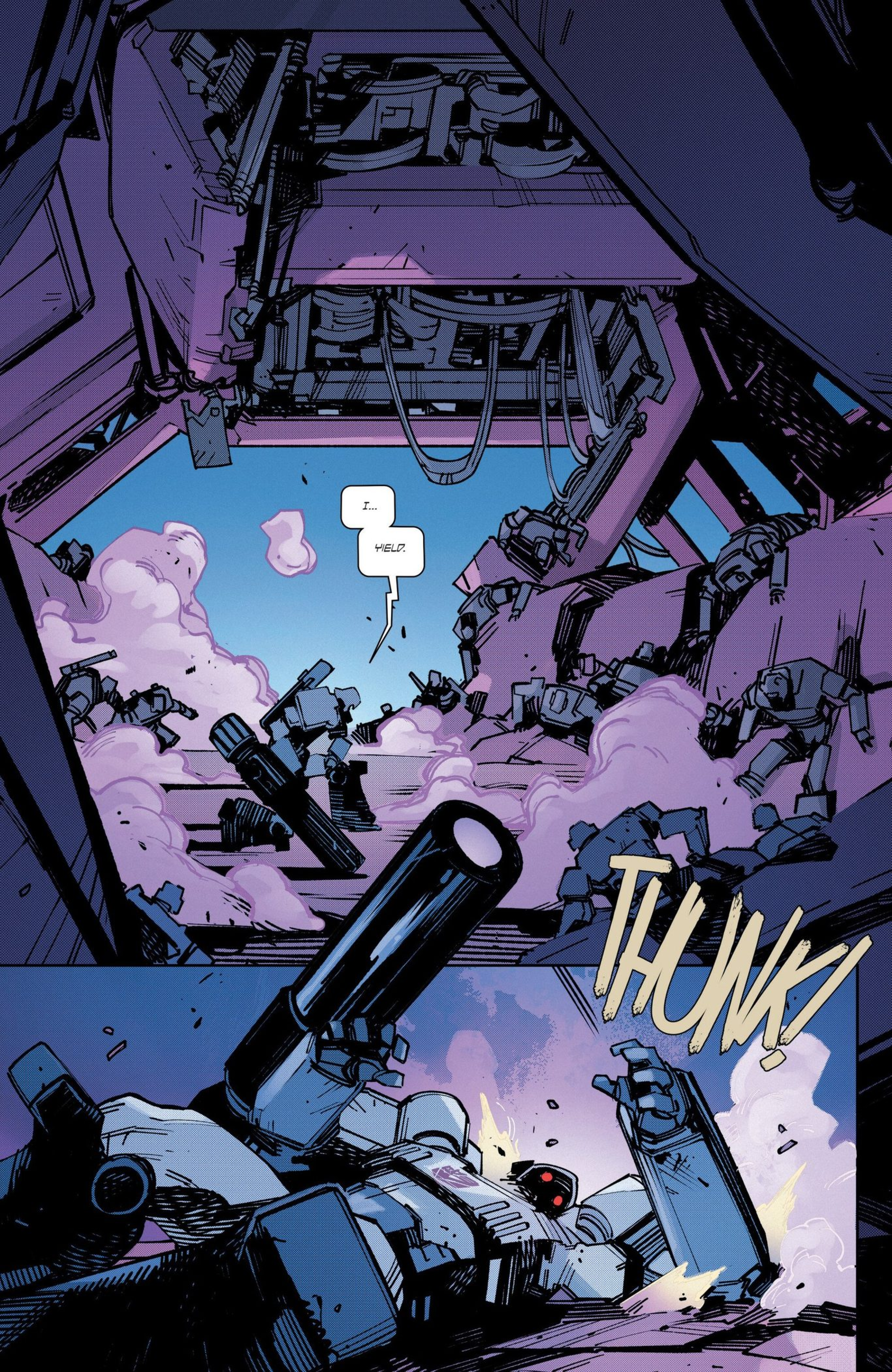

VOOMP!
WRA-KOOM!
I SAID I WAS **THROUGH** WITH YOUR TRIALS!

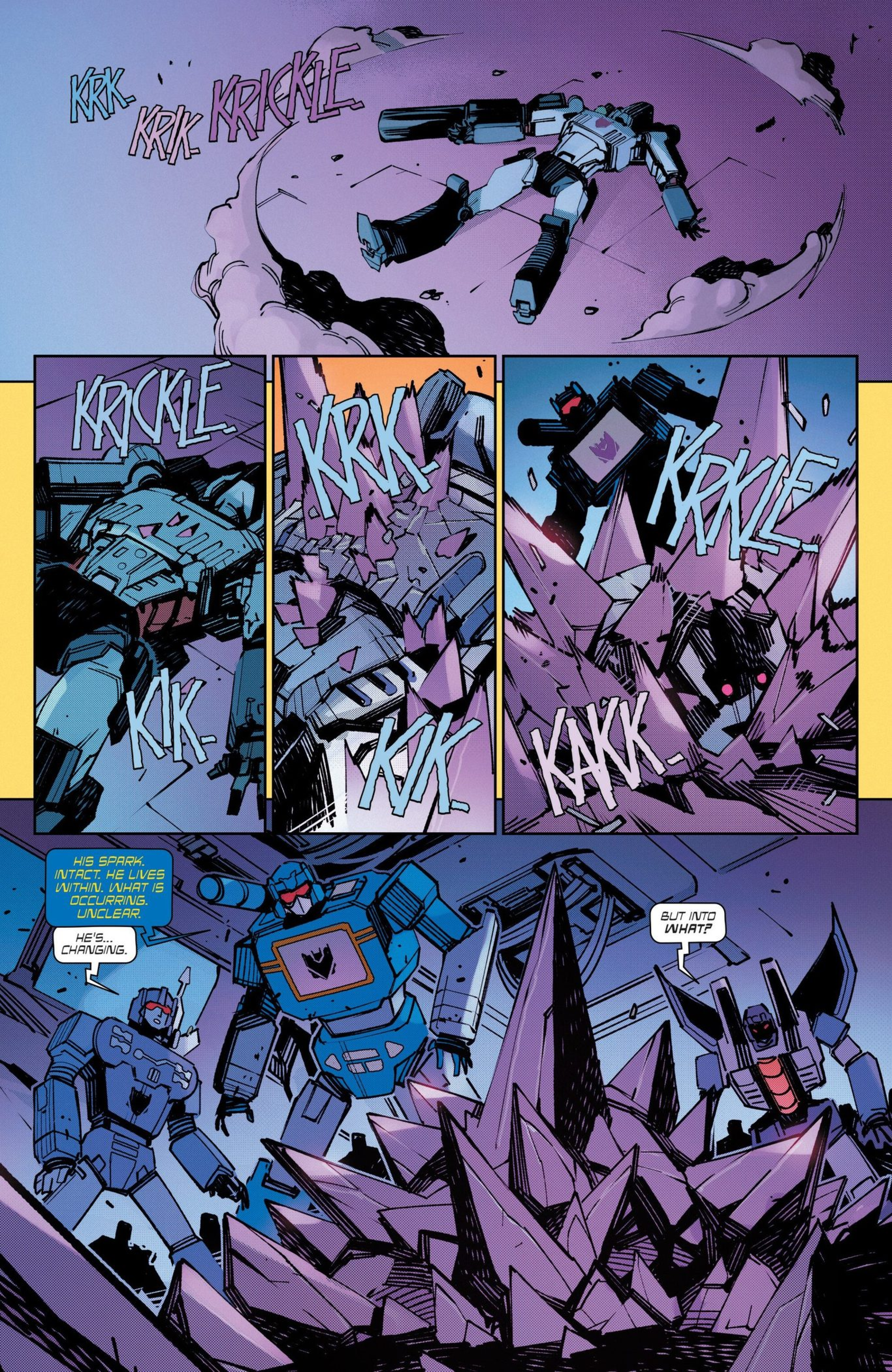

THEN BOW BEFORE MEGATRONUS.
BEND YOUR WILL TO MINE AND RECEIVE THE TRUE POWER OF THE MATRIX OF OPPRESSION.


...
CHOOSE YOUR NEXT ACTIONS WISELY.
YOU CANNOT RETURN TO THE TRIALS FROM HERE. THE MATRIX OFFERS ONLY **OBLIVION** AS ALTERNATIVE TO **SERVITUDE.**
SERVITUDE.


YOU WILL WALK MY PATH?


I WILL... WALK. YOUR. PATH.


I...
YIELD.
THUNK!


KRK-
KRIK-
KRICKLE-
KRICKLE-
KIK-
KRK-
KIK-
KRKLE-
KAKK-
HIS SPARK. INTACT. HE LIVES WITHIN. WHAT IS OCCURRING. UNCLEAR.
HE'S... CHANGING.
BUT INTO *WHAT?*

THE MATRIX OF LETTERSHIP

SEND LETTERS TO
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Ludo Lullabi drawing Megatron issues is just about as good as it gets! It was a pleasure to have him join us once more and bring his artist talent with him. If you're not reading his acclaimed Skybound original series GHOST PEPPER then I would highly recommend it! Welcome back to the Matrix of Lettership where I, your faithful editor Ben Abernathy, am joined by internationally acclaimed writer Robert Kirkman to answer your wonderful letters. Robert--please say hello!

Hello everyone! I'll second Ben's endorsement for GHOST PEPPER! It's a comic that more than deserves your attention. Just think of how amazing this issue could have been if Ludo had written it instead of me! You want that pure Ludo magic, GHOST PEPPER is for you. Seriously, give it a look. I'm so thrilled this issue is in your hands. Ever since I took over, I've been dying to get to this issue. I love picking up all the plot threads Daniel had going and being able to put my spin on them. This issue more or less explains what's been going on with ol' Megs and ties it in with that spectacular issue 19 in some cool ways. And, man oh man…just you wait for what's coming next. Cool stuff ahead! Now let's dive into the mail!

* * *

Hello Transformers team.

I've been a long time reader for a while now, actually just finished up Issue 27, and it's been a crazy ride--like, holy $#@%, Shockwave's not dead? Please, you have to animate this series. I know you can't say much, but still…don't give all the screen time to G.I. Joe! Anyways, can't wait to see those missing faces. Possibly including Tailgate and/or the Insecticons? Eh, one can only dream. Oh, almost forgot. You've done a terrific job at adapting all that came before, and I adore your branching off from the original storyline. It's been a truly golden experience picking out each little reference from the new designs, especially with the recent additions of Bulkhead and Shredhead. Keep up the STELLAR work and give Ultra Magnus some time out of the boots--I assure you that we all wish to see more of white Optimus…'Til All Are One!

Your Faithful Reader,
Alexander

Thank you for the letter, Alexander, and the suggestions…the Insecticons would be fun! I have my original Kickback sitting on a shelf next to me!

Is it worth mentioning to say that in my mind, Ultra Magnus is NOT wearing armor and that's just his body? I know it's different in many of the other continuities in Transformers lore, and to me, it just makes the most sense to not be armor he could take off.

* * *

Bah-Weep-Graaaaagnah weep ni ni bong!!

Ahh! I love this comic so much I'm gnawing at the bars of my enclosure!!! I've just finished issue #29 and I can't WAIT to see Optimus and Elita's divorce arc. Everything you're doing with this series is so much fun, and every issue encourages me to keep pursuing art and design. Can I ask how you all got involved in the comic book industry? I wanna get in the door!!

-Emmie

Thank you for the support and the letter, Emmie. I think Robert's publishing origin story is probably more interesting than mine, haha!

Way to punt the ball, Ben! I got into the industry through self-publishing. I worked at a comic store for two years in my late teens, and learned how comics distribution worked for that side, then I got a buddy from high school to draw a book with me and I backwards engineered what I learned at the comic store to be able to publish the book and actually get it into stores. From there, I languished in the low selling world of black and white independent comics for nearly three years, getting massively in debt and nearly ruining my life. Once I'd honed my skills a bit more, I was able to get new books picked up by Image Comics to be published. Most sold poorly, although slightly better than my self-published work, until I got around to doing INVINCIBLE and THE WALKING DEAD in 2003, and those books eventually sold well enough that I was actually making a living in comics. It's funny because that whole ordeal was the most stressful, painful, and daunting time of my life, so in my mind it was a long period of time I slogged through, but it was actually…checks notes…slightly less than FOUR YEARS. Jesus. Anyway, everyone's breaking in story is different. I imagine a lot of them moving forward will involve having a Tiktok or Youtube channel.

* * *

Hey Robert, Dan, Sarah, Ben, and everyone else on the team!

I've always liked Transformers from a distance but seeing one of my absolute FAVORITE writers and artists of all time on this book caused me to read all of DWJs run just in time for #25 and oh boy did I fall in love with the universe, by the end of that first volume I was a Transformers fan for life! My favorite Transformer was Thundercracker and seeing Robert turn him into an Autobot was such an awesome experience to read with no spoilers! I also sure hope you guys do the Dinobots or the Maximals soonish!

Sincerely,
Mr. Hallett

P.S. Robert, please don't kill Thundercracker...

Good to hear from you, Mr. Hallet, and I, like so many fans of the series, have loved the development of Thundercracker and am enjoying the path he's on. Wait until you see what's coming up for him!

Yeah, death! Just kidding! Glad your digging it, Mr. Hallett! We hear your requests and we hope to accommodate them as soon as we can!

* * *

Hi!

Reading this new Transformers journey has been breathtaking thus far, and issue 29 is just more proof of that! This month's spread really blew me away! Throughout it, but especially in these past five issues, your exploration into Thundercracker's character has been absolutely lovely. From his first mere doubts, to saving a group of surviving humans from a cruel death, to him abandoning the Decepticons entirely to do what is right has genuinely made me obsessed with him. Your take on him has completely altered my brain chemistry. I've never been so enraptured by a fictional character, and what will happen next to them, in my life. Your writing has moved me enough to drive from my small town over a mountain range to another county to pick up my new issues every month! Thank you for taking me on so many wild new places, literally and metaphorically. Looking forward to the next issue!

Maddy

Wow, a lot of love for Thundecracker this month! This rocks!

And well deserved! He's a great character! So much was put in place during DWJ's run that I just fell in love with the guy, myself. Thundercracker for life!

* * *

G'day Transformers Team,

I just wanted to say (or write), WOW. This comic series has been amazing. I thought the series ended at issue #24, and I was so devastated, but I literally jumped for joy when I rediscovered it this Christmas! The one mask scene with Optimus and the rescued girl warmed my heart; it has to be up there as my top Transformers scenes of all time. Both writing, art, and lettering are amazing. I'm constantly blown away by the care that is put into it. I am also really proud to see more female characters present and playing a larger role than just a love interest in the comics, something that I have noticed in a lot of TF media over the years. Elita, in particular, whilst technically being Optimus's love interest (?), is such a capable, strong, unique character that I absolutely love. She. Gets. Stuff. DONE.

Only she could label Optimus Prime as an enemy to the Autobots, and I respect her for it. Thank you for your hard work and dedication,

Evie

Elita certainly DOES get it done…I hope you enjoyed #30, Evie!

And if you love Elita, just wait until you see what Elita Prime does next issue! Exploring this battle hardened Elita-1 who has been fighting on Cyberton, holding the Autobot forces together for millions of years is an absolute blast. While our series will mostly focus on Earth, we will be checking in on Cybertron from time to time--like next issue!!

* * *

Hello Transformers team!

I've gotta say I wasn't really sold on vampire Megatron at first, but this issue was AMAZING! Got a few questions for Mr. Kirkman, and he once said in an Invincible letters column that lists are a surefire way to get his attention!

1. I know you'll never reveal any future plot points, but is there any chance we could see a Dark Energon zombie plot in the future?

Not from me. I've had plenty of zombies in my lifetime.

2. Is this version of Bulkhead based on Transformers Prime or Transformers Animated?

Well…I'm slightly more familiar with Animated, though I've watched both. He won't be quite as silly as he was at times in Animated, so maybe he's closer to the Prime version? But honestly…he's the Energon Universe version. And that's an important point for me. These characters are beloved, so if you don't like this iteration of your favorite character, that's okay, there are others and will be more as time goes on. THIS Trailbreaker is dead… but there are others out there you can still enjoy.

3. WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE TRAILBREAKER???

SEE PREVIOUS ANSWER! I'm sorry. I truly am. It's not something we enjoyed! It's…leading to cool things…I promise.

-Robert

Thank you for the letter, Robert. There's so much great stuff coming this year, I look forward to hearing from you again haha.

Yeah, thanks for writing, other Robert!

* * *

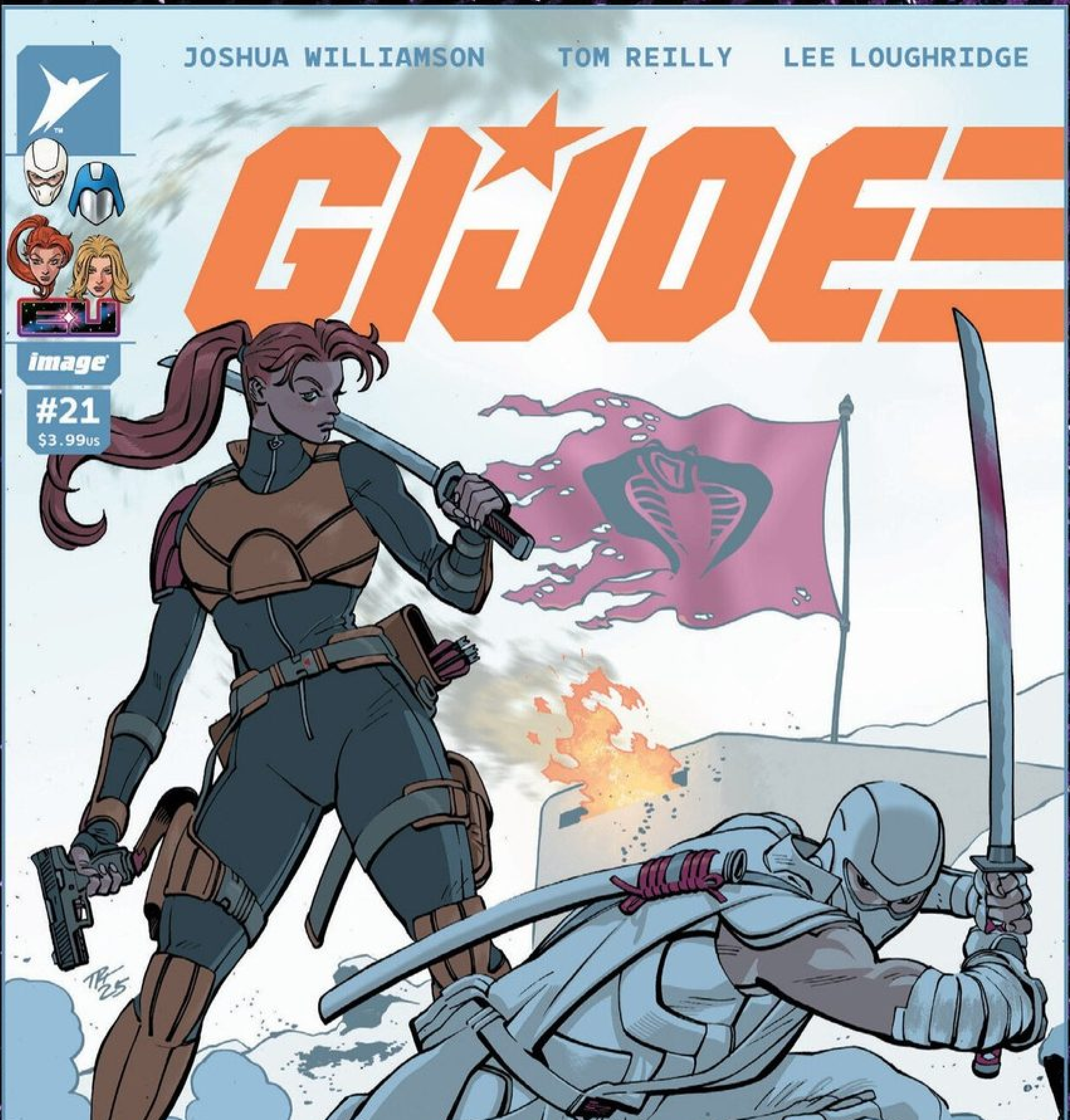
And that's a wrap for this month! The amazing Jason Howard returns to TRANSFORMERS next month to be our regular artist…and #32 is a BLOCKBUSTER issue and you'd all better get it as soon as it comes out so nothing get spoiled! See ya in May!

-Ben

Yeah, I've had ENOUGH accidental spoilers to last a lifetime! Make sure you go into issue #32 FRESH and UNSPOILED, WOO!!! See you all then!

-Robert

EXPLORE THE ENERGON UNIVERSE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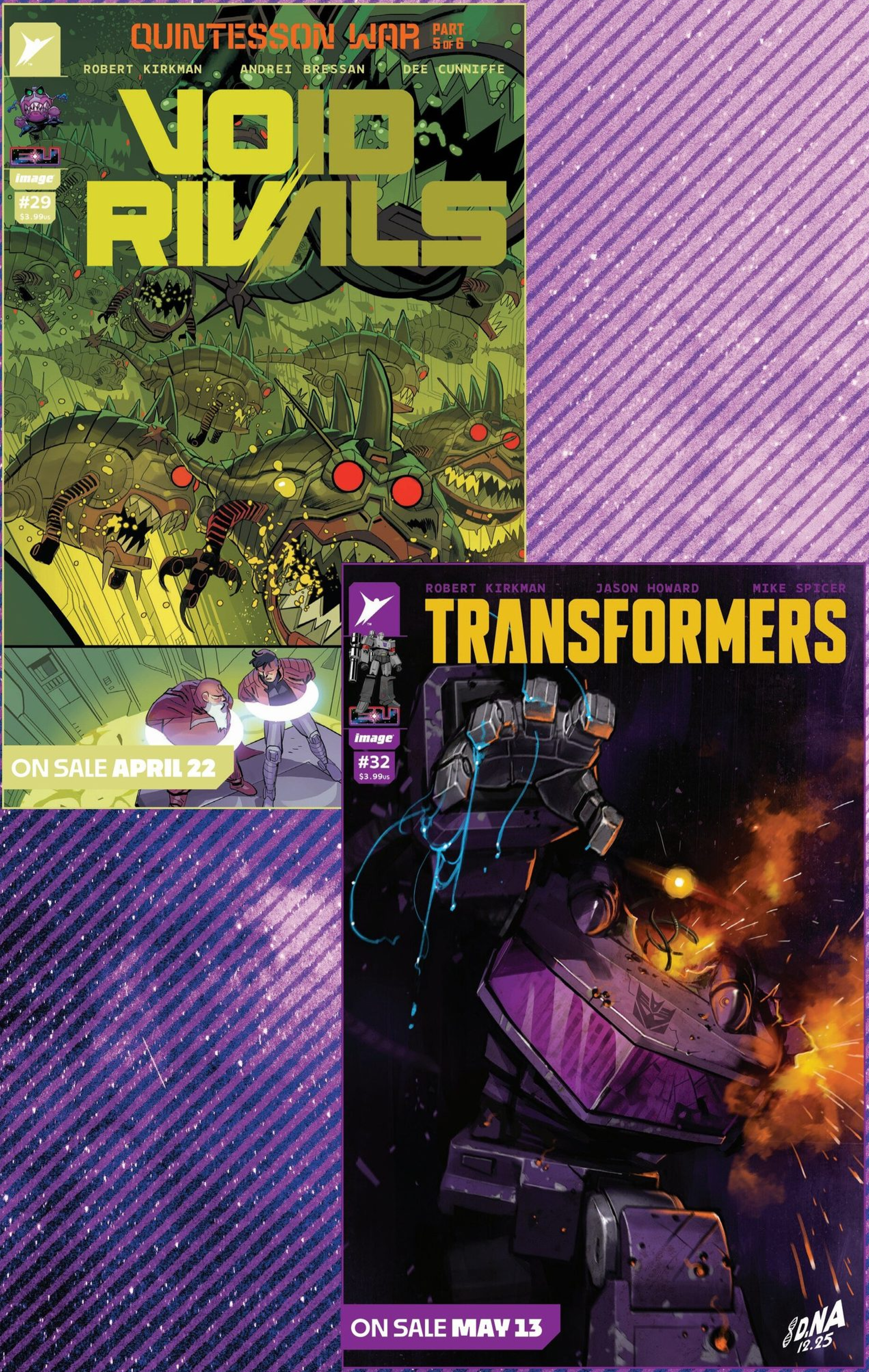
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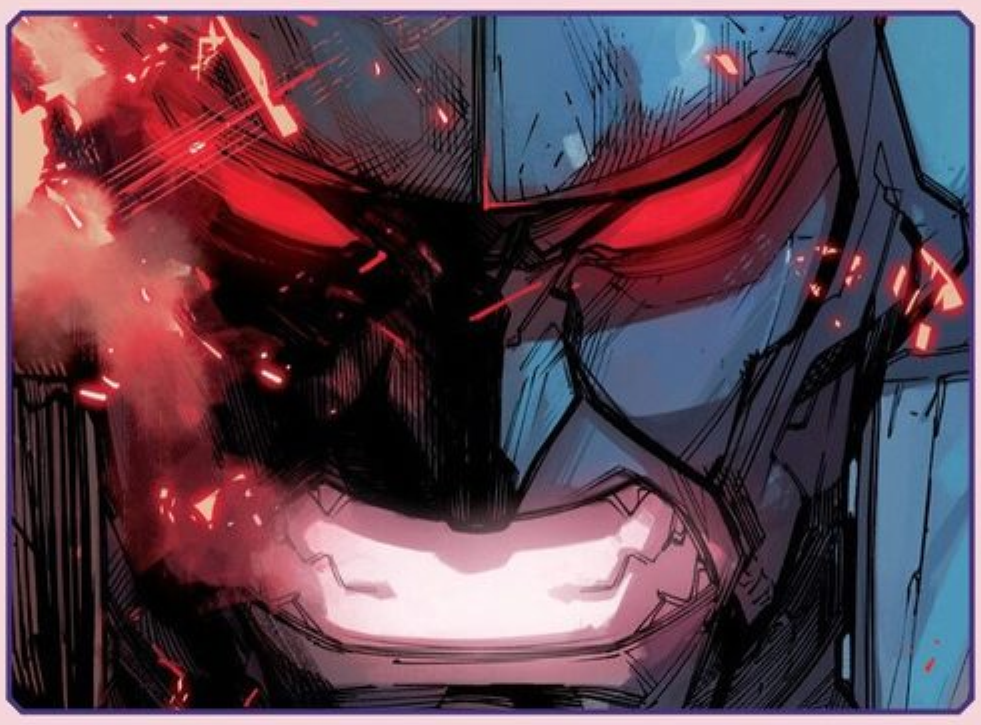
ENERGON EXPERIENCE

Dezimir's master is revealed to be…Megatronus?! I'll bet few of you saw that coming as based on the letters after TRANSFORMERS #19, everyone thought it was some villain from the 1986 movie, haha. Where this story goes next will shock and delight you all…buckle up!

Ben!

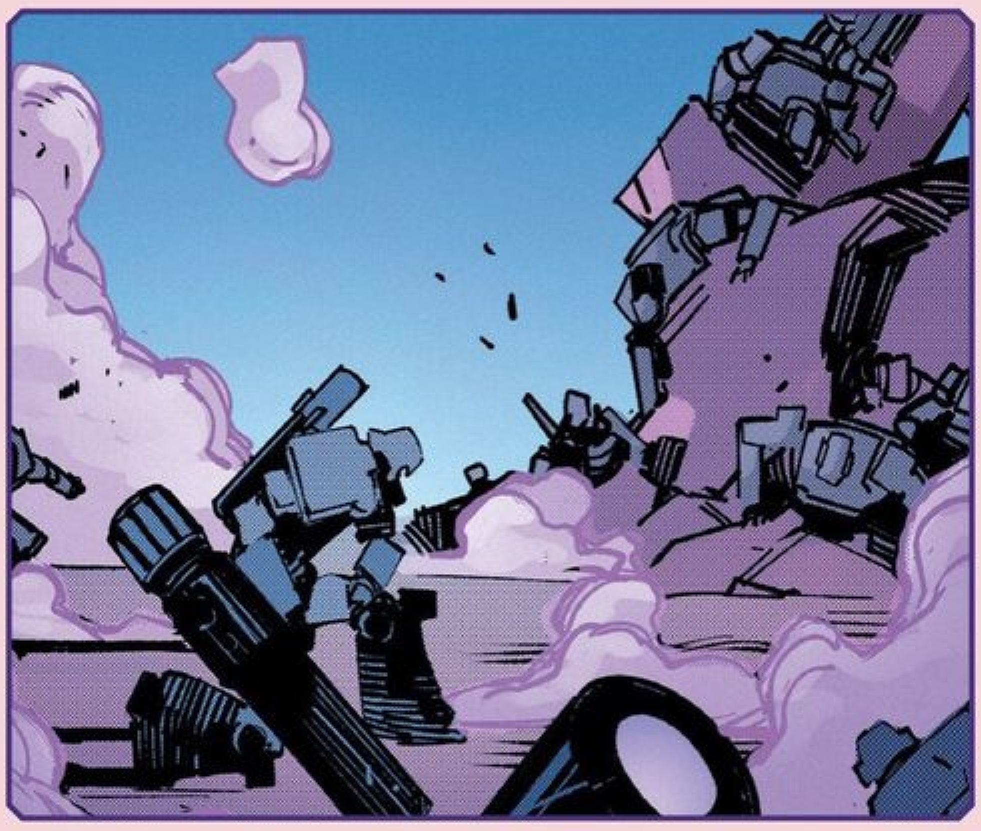
-Ben Abernathy, Executive Editor



CHARACTER SPOTLIGHT

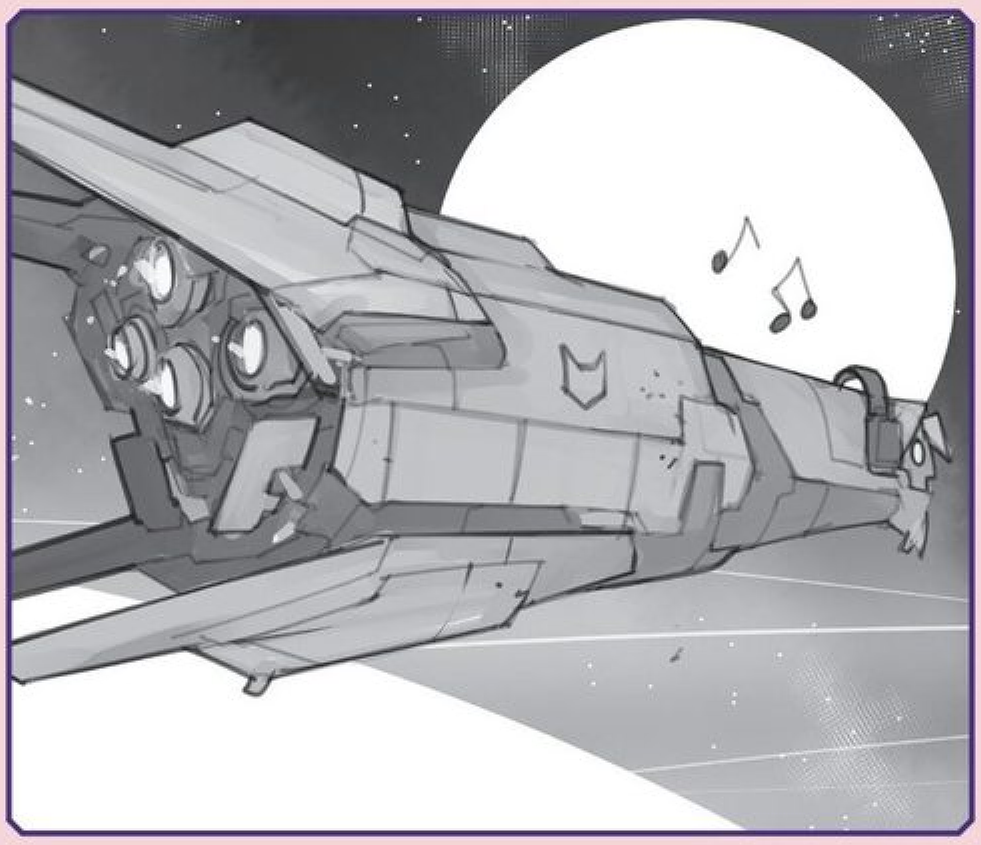
WHO: Megatron
Decepticon leader.

WHAT: A brutal warrior and brilliant strategist, Megatron has been leading the Decepticons in the war against the Autobots for thousands of years…can he will his warriors to a final victory?



DECEPTI-CAN'T!

This issue reveals that the Decepticons have possibly met their match in combat… but not at the hands of the Autobots! Soundwave, Skywarp, and the rest stood no chance against a possessed and seizuring Megatron! If he could harness his power while in his trance, the Autobots might not stand a chance!



CREATOR SPOTLIGHT

Q: Welcome back to the Energon Experience, Ludo Lullabi, and now I must ask you the most important question of our time--if you had an alt-mode, what would it be?

*A: I'd be an old cargo spaceship. Not a laser-filled war machine, but a quiet vessel traveling from world to world, carrying stories along the way--while listening to 'Prophecy Theme' by Toto.^^*

THE ENERGON UNIVERSE CHECKLIST

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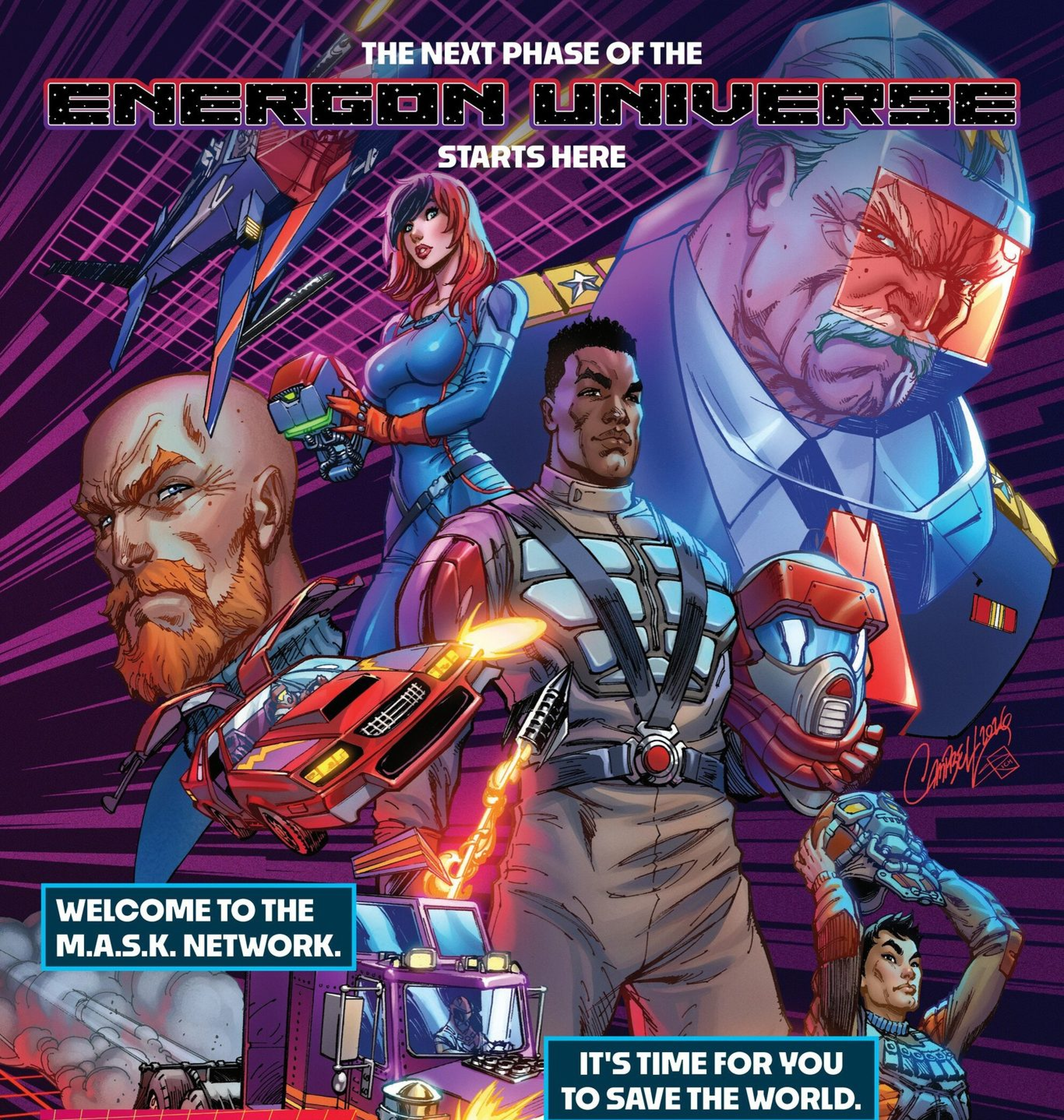
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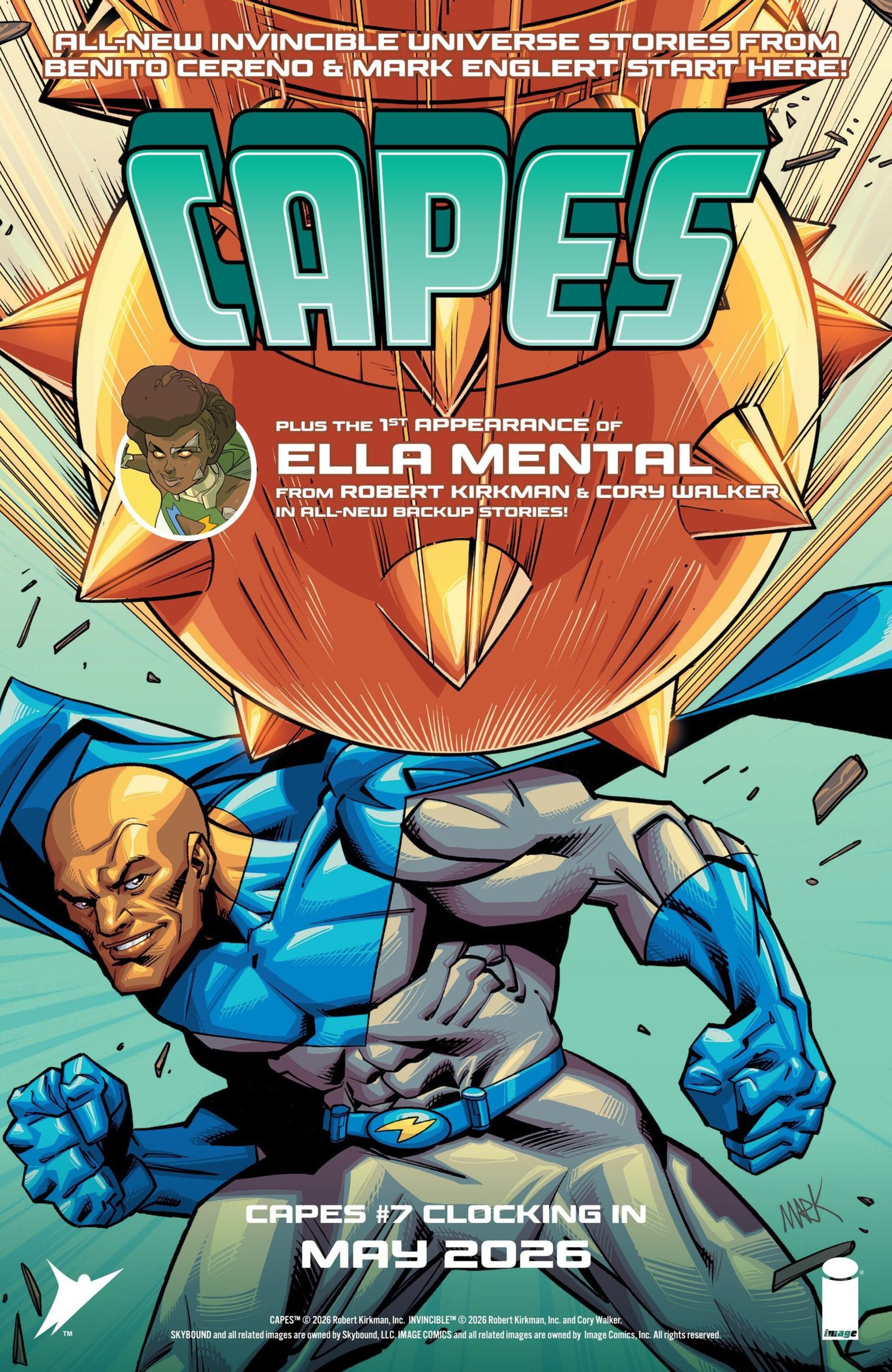
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